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143

Bequest of

THOMAS ALLIBONE JANVIER

AND OF

CATHARINE ANN JANVIER

HIS WIFE

TO THE

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1914

MIRELLE,

A

PASTORAL EPIC OF PROVENCE,

FROM THE

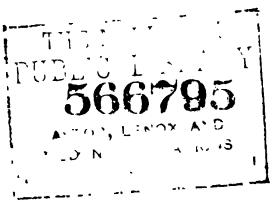
PROVENÇAL OF F. MISTRAL.

TRANSLATED BY H. CRICHTON.

London:

MACMILLAN AND CO.

1868.



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PREFACE.

A FEW words by way of preface seem necessary to a translation of a work, which, as well as its author, has been too little known to the English reader.

"Mirèio" was first published in 1857, when M. Mistral's age did not exceed (I believe) twenty-five. This first edition was not accompanied by a French translation. A second edition, dedicated to M. Lamartine, in a short quatrain, of which the following is an exact copy of the French translation, was published in 1859.

A LAMARTINE.

Je te consacre Mireille: c'est mon cœur et mon âme;—c'est la fleur de mes années;—c'est un raisin de Crau qu'avec toutes ses feuilles—t'offre un paysan.

The work consists of stanzas of seven lines, and a word for word translation, similar to that of the dedication, into French prose, is placed by the side of each stanza, in which even the contents of every line are distinguished. It is from the French translation, owing to my want of knowledge of the Provençal, that the English version has been made.

The following is the stanza with which the poem opens:

"Cante uno chato de Prouvènço.
Dins lis amour de sa jouvènço,
A travès de la Crau, vers la mar, dins li bla,
Umble escoulan dóu grand Oumèro
Ién la vole segui. Coume èro
Rén qu'uno chato de la terro,
En foro de la Crau se n'es gaire parla."

This stanza is thus rendered into French:—Je chante une jeune fille de Provence.—Dans les amours de sa jeunesse,—à travers la Crau, vers la mer, dans les blés,—humble écolier du grand Homère,—je veux la suivre. Comme c'était—seulement une fille de la glèbe,—en dehors de la Crau il s'en est peu parlé.

In determining the form in which I should attempt a translation, I soon came to the conclusion that in English the metre of the original stanza would produce weariness in so long a work, and be less capable, at least in my hands, of adequately rendering the original, than that which I have adopted, which seemed to me calculated, without much addition or suppression, to convey the substance of each individual stanza. It is one also which is justified by old and modern use.

Of the scene and subject of the poem, I hope it will be thought that the notes are a sufficient elucidation, and that

any addition here would be superfluous. The geography of the country, over which the story extends, is accurately observed. I would remind the reader that the four departments of Basses-Alpes, Bouches du Rhone, Var, and Vaucluse, with a small portion of that of Drôme, comprise the ancient Provence (Provincia Provinciarum of the Romans). I believe it may be asserted that scarcely a principal town, ruin, or other feature of considerable interest or importance in this extensive field remains undistinguished by the author's patriotism.

I do not attempt any notice of the Provençal tongue. To be useful, it must be too long for the present place; suffice it to say that it is an independent and distinct language, that of the Troubadours, and far above the denomination of a dialect. In the 6th Canto, commencing at stanza 8, will be found a graceful tribute of admiration, addressed by M. Mistral to some of his fellow poets. Their number alone is an evidence of the vigorous vitality of this language, as well as of the literary ambition and high cultivation of those to whom it is still a mother tongue. The catalogues of publications by other modern authors, in prose and verse, prove how largely M. Mistral's list might be extended.

In venturing to submit my translation to the English public, I feel called upon to express my thanks to M. Mistral, for the courteous manner in which he has accorded

to me his sanction for its publication, and for the ready and effectual assistance which he has given me in reply to my applications for explanations on words or subjects which I had difficulty in understanding. I can assure him of my belief and hope that the beauties of his poem are too prominent and essential to be liable to suffer much from the want of skill of a translator, and if, as a faint reflex of his genius, my labours should meet with the slightest meed of approbation, I may sincerely say to him,

Quod spiro et placeo (si placeo) tuum est.

In conclusion, may I express a hope that the subject of Mirelle may sometimes, in some degree, beguile the long journey which so many thousands of my countrymen and countrywomen make yearly in search of a refuge from Northern cold, or of pleasure, to the South of France and Italy. During many hours they pass through the scene of the story, and many of the principal towns or objects described or touched upon are visible to them, and form more or less prominent features of their line of route.

H. C.

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A MAIDEN fair, of fair Provence I sing;
In her youth's loves, o'er Cray her steps I'd trace,[3]
Had I, his humble scholar, Homer's wing,
Where wheat makes glad or waves the land embrace
In sooth the daughter of a son of toil,
Her name scarce breathed beyond Cray's flinty soil.

* The numerals refer to the notes at the end of the Canto.

2.

Albeit her brow with youth alone was bright,
Nor golden crown, nor damask stole she wore;
Would our scorned tongue could lift her to the height
Of the throned Queen whom willing hearts adore;
For 'tis for you alone I tune my lay,
Ye swains and shepherds of her native Cray.

3.

Lord of my country's faith, 'mid shepherds born,
Inspire my soul and guide my words aright;
Thou know'st, when all is green on sunny morn
Or dew-dropped eve, and ripe figs tempt the sight,
Man, like the ravening wolf, will rush and seize
E'en the last offering of the generous trees.

4.

But on the chosen tree whose boughs he rends,
Thou bidd'st in mercy some fair shoot and tall
Rise where its height his hands insatiate fends,
Prompt to the spring, balm-breathing virginal,
Ripening to Holy Magdalena's day,
And offering hungry birds a ready prey.

5.

And, oh! to me 'tis given that branch to hail,
The while its freshness fanning my desires;
What time it waveth to thy fostering gale,
Its fruit immortal, and its leafy spires,
Grant me, with words Provençal-winged, great Lord,
The scath of bird from Thy blest sprout to ward.

6.

'Twixt Rhone's long serried poplars, and his shore
Of osier riches, stood a humble cot;
There, while his waters gnawed the rubble floor,
A basket-maker blessed his humble lot:
He, with his son, from farm to farm would rove,
To mend the goods which once their fingers wove.

7.

One day, as o'er the meads they passed with freight
Of osier faggots, "Father," cried the son,
"Behold the sky! See'st thou below how great
Yon row of pillared clouds o'er Maguélonne?[4]
If in one heap they mass ere we descry
The Croft, our garb will scarce their rage defy."

8.

"'Tis the sea breeze that gives of rain no sign,"
The old man said: "the west were sure to fear."
"Then, father, say how many yoke of kine
They drive at Cornel Croft the lands to ear."
"Six," spoke the sire; "nor sure doth Cray contain,
In all its breadth, one more so fair domain.

9.

"Ah! see'st thou not their olive groves, where flaunt,
Like ribands, vines and almonds 'twixt their rows;
And then a charm none other land can vaunt,
Of all where olive, vine, or almond grows;
The rows are many as the year hath days,
And trees as many every row displays."

10.

"But, caspitello," quick exclaimed the youth,[5]
"What troops of damsels must they gather here,
Such trees to cull." "That rights itself, in sooth;
With All Saints' Day the maids of Baux appear,[6]
With each choice fruit their bags and sacks flow o'er,
And to their songs they'd fill as many more."

11.

Still spoke old Master Ambrose, while the sun,
Drooping beyond the hills, with many a hue
Tinted the lacey clouds. Their labours done,
The hinds on neck-yoked steers their way pursue
To evening meal, their goads held up on high,
While twilight dims the plain with russet dye.

12.

"On, on," quoth Vincent, "lo, the ricks that raise
Their crests on high, and shelter is in store."
"No flocks," saith Ambrose, "e'er so thriving graze.
The pinewood turf all summer they explore,
Then on the flinty plain in winter roam;
Sure no good gift is lacking to this home.

13.

"Then lo, the tufted pride of ancient trees,
The ample tilage of the roofs that shade
The beauteous fount whence drinks the steer, the bees,
Their busy hives in countless ranks arrayed,
Which autumn spoils, and May atoning warms,
The cornel boughs to blacken with their swarms."

14.

"But this domain, O father, fair and wide,
Infolds one treasure, fairest, sweetest, best—
The farm's sweet maiden. 'Twas last summer-tide
She bade us weave—well thou rememberest—
Two paniers, crops of olives to contain,
And for her own neat basket handles twain."

15.

'Mid such discourse before the gate they stand,
The maid (her silkworms paid their leafy meal)
Shunning the dew, beneath the portal planned
Yet one more skein to feed her spindle reel.
"God bless this house," the basket weaver prayed,
And cast his osiers down, his stock in trade.

16.

"God grant thee like, good Master Ambrose, lo,
My spindle for its duty thus I dress;
Why come ye all so late, and, as I trow,
From Vallabrègue?" "Yea, damsel, right thy guess;
Your croft lay furrow-straight upon our way,
So on your straw, thus late, a night we pray."

17.

Now a field roller humbly for their seat
They choose, the wicker pleacher and his son;
Their sheaf unbound, in silence they complete—
Silence the lamp of work—a ware begun
At other time—their nimble fingers ply,
And cross and plait the rods as shuttles fly.

18.

Of scarce full sixteen years could Vincent speak,
Yet youth with choicer beauties ne'er was crowned;
Well-set his form and lithe, his manly cheek
The sun with seeming zest had richly browned—
From darkest soils the finest wheats advance,
Dark grapes yield liveliest wine to haste the dance.

19.

Right well he'd won the mysteries of his art,
The withe or osier how to dress or bend:
Though yet in subtlest work he took small part,
With crates and hampers could his skill contend,
And the strong gear that implement the farm,
Or winter huts to keep the watch-dog warm.

20.

To various use he'd split the pliant reed,
Make goods that knew no loitering on the mart,
And millet brooms—all these, and more with speed
Of practised hand he wrought, and willing heart.
But see, from fallow and from furrow come
The hinds, glad listeners to the call of home.

21.

E'en now Mirelle, the farm's sweet waiting-maid,
Had in the cool, on table hewn of stone,
The first of garden dainties amply laid;
Each hind with boxen spoon had claimed his own
From the soft beans—but still work'd on the two,
The sire and son. "What, ho! What is't ye do?

22.

"Up, Master Ambrose, com'st thou not to sup?"
Cried goodman Raymond, lord of the domain,
With air scarce gentle; "bind thy wickers up,
The stars' nativity bids rest again;
For each, Mirelle, a porringer prepare;—
To table—sit not starved and weary there."

23.

" Up," cries the father, as with doubting mind
A humble corner of the board they choose
And cut a modest crust: alert and kind,
Of courtesies inborn, Mirelle now strews
O'er savoury beans the oil from choicest land,
And hastes to serve them with her own fair hand.

24.

Scarce fifteen years bore record of Mirelle.
Ye plains of Cray, and gentle hills of Baux,
And thou blue misted slope of Font Vielle,[8]
Nor 'fore nor since such beauty could ye know;
Born when the sun was gladdest, in each cheek
A dimple lay that helped its rose to speak.

25.

Her look was soothing, as is balm to pain,
Nor ray of guiding star more soft and pure;
Her hair, like raven's wing on snowy plain,
On her orbed bosom fell, that half-mature
Roundness without and innocence within
Was like to double peach of silky skin.

26.

Then sparkling quick, nay, fitful could she be;
Fancy your glass of water held her charms,
You'd drink its utmost drop enrapturedly;
But now the day's achievements on the farms
Are counted round (a custom old and tried,
Long ere, alas! alas! my father died).

27.

"Come, Master Ambrose, come," the lads exclaim,
"A song, a song: who at this board would doze?"
"Nay, my good friends, forbear, 't would be your shame,
Ye know, man's strength and wane doth God dispose
Sure 'mongst yourselves, my youths, a song ye'll find—
'Tis to the young and hale the muse is kind."

28.

"Nay, father, nay, we challenge not in jest,"
Roars out again the bluff and merry crew;
"But see, the impatient wine with sparkling zest
O'ertops thy glass." "I once could sing, 'tis true;
But who would brook the cigale's song to hear,
Its organ broken, out of tune and gear?"9

29.

" Pardon, good friend, nor hesitate to please,"
Soft whispered him Mirelle, " one trifling strain."
" My voice, perchance, may tune to lips like these,
Sweet maid, though like the ear that's shed its grain."
Thus moved, he sang, though not ere he had quaffed
The rich Provençal juice with lengthened draught.

I.

Brave Baillie Suffren rules our fleet;
Five hundred Provençaux we greet
His signal, and from Toulon beat.

II.

Our breasts with hate of England glow,
We swear nor home nor love to know
Till we have ta'en or sunk the foe.

III.

Full thirty days we search the main
And see but gulls, in endless train,
Seek yards and sails short rest to gain.

IV.

Another month we're tempest-torn:
From morn till eve, from eve till morn,
We work the pumps till all are worn.

V.

Another, and we chew despair,
And seethe with rage—no foe is there,
Nought for our guns to teach and tear.

VI.

"Lads of the foretop," cries Suffren
One day, and straight the foretop men
Tow'rds Araby cast longing ken.

VII.

"By Heaven's high throne," we start to hear,
"Three British sail straight for us steer;
Smart, lads, the guns for action clear."

VIII.

Our great commander cried—"They know
What luscious figs at Antibes grow:
Fruit of another growth we'll show."

IX.

He speaks—the air is all on fire,
For forty guns their flames expire,
To teach the royal ships our ire.

X.

One ship a crippled hull lies fast;
No sound is heard save cannon blast,
The roaring sea, or cracking mast.

XI.

Hurrah! hurrah! a span or so
Is all that parts us from the foe.
The captain pale—with fear? ah! no—

XII.

On deck unmoved, "Avast there" says,
"Your firing, boys, we've other ways
To anoint them with the oil of Aix."[11]

XIII.

Ere yet he ceased, our Provence crew
To halbert, pike, and cutlass flew,
And forth the long-toothed grapnel drew.

XIV.

"To board, to board," the chorus ran,
On English deck leaped Provence man,
And then the massacre began.

XV.

What blows, what death around we deal;
The creaking masts all spring and reel,
While bends the deck beneath the heel.

XVI.

Here 'neath the waves a foeman dives,
And many a Provençal survives
Whose gripe was parents' woe and wives

30.

"But, friend," broke in old Raymond, "you recite
A fiction squared our credence to o'erwhelm."
"My song, i'faith, no fiction doth indite,
For I was actor there, and held the helm;
If to a thousand years my days were drawn,
That memory first would greet each opening dawn."

31.

" And you in that dread carnage had your share?
But sure as scythe spreads 'neath the forgeman's blows,
So they 'neath yours dilate—their voids repair—
And crush and bray their thrice outnumbered foes."
" The English!" cried the singer, with disdain;
And soon, his smiles recalled, he sings again.

XVII.

Wading in blood we fresh the fight
From early dawn till fall of night;
The smoke no longer blocks the sight.

XVIII.

One hundred mates no more we greet,
Three sunken ships our tale complete—
Three ships of England's royal fleet.

XIX.

Then as we make our own loved shore,
Hulled by a hundred shot or more,
Yards gone, and sails a ragged store,

XX.

The Baillie cries, in kindly tone—
"Cheer up, my boys, the King shall own
Each man's great deeds upon his throne."

XXI.

"Good Admiral, thy will is clear:
The King his servants' deeds will hear,
But us poor lads, will't mend our cheer?

XXII.

"From home, from all we love, we fled;
To save our King we've fought and bled,
Yet lack, you see, a crust of bread.

XXIII.

"And though in Paris thou shalt see,
In thy just honour bend each knee,
No hearts will love thee there as we.

XXIV.

"Could we make kings, nor home nor friends
We'd know till, ere the sun descends,
We'd throned thee on our fingers' ends."

XXV.

Thus sang one eve a Martigan,[12]
As through his nets his fingers span—
Brave Suffren proud to Paris ran.

XXVI.

And since, were't cruel chance, or hate
Of little men for actions great,
We saw him not, nor heard his fate.

32.

'Twas well for him, the brave sea sonneteer,
The basket-craftsman, that his song should close,
His voice was failing, for his tears were near:
But admiration wots not of repose;
The hinds agape, commend both theme and skill,
And fondly fancy that they listen still.

33.

"Lang syne, my lads," he said, "when Martha spun,[13]
Their songs were pretty, nor their measure scant;
My tune, mayhap, is old and out of run,
Their music finer now, and more gallant:
Their French, perhaps, with neater surface flows,
But to such hollow strains what bosom glows?"

34.

He ceased—the husbandmen the table quit,
And their six yoke of stately oxen lead
To where the fountains sweetest jets emit;
Then to the brook that skirts the favourite mead
Their mules conduct, in ranks obedient strung,
The minstrel's air still trilling on each tongue.

35.

All save Mirelle, who, smiling winsomely,
Lingers with Master Ambrose' son behind;
In converse sweet the softening eve they see,
Each to the other mutually inclined,
As each to each two cabridelles will bend [14]
When playful zephyrs for their sweets contend.

36.

"Ah! Vincent," said she, "as thy footsteps roam,
With loaded back thy pleasant trade to ply,
How many an ancient castle, stately home,
Or graceful pleasaunce in thy path must lie;
What shows, what fêtes, what marvels cheer thy way!
We from our peaceful dovecote never stray."

37.

"Damsel, 'tis true; and if I slake my thirst
With sloes, they do the pitchered water's part;
If storm and tempest o'er us glower and burst,
The zest of thrifty labour floats the heart:
In every road, but seek it, and we meet
Some shade that spreads refreshment for the feet.

38.

"So when the summer blooms, and olive rows,
Of promise full, with clustered flowers are decked,
And the whole grove with white enchantment glows,
We seek the ash trees, scent-endowed detect
And make our prey the gay cantharides,
Now green and sparkling as the sun and trees,—

39.

"And bear them to the town a nimble trade,
Or from the oaks of Marragues (pigmy tribe)[15]
Crop scarlet-blooded kermès; then we wade
Through lake or pool the glutton leach to bribe
In their cool haunts our bare limbs to attack—
Crude anglers that nor bait nor tackle lack.

40.

"Hast thou not seen Les Saintes, the sacred isle[16]
Of the three Maries, where so sweet they hymn?
Their holy festival I've seen, the while
They bring all sick of body, halt of limb:
In that small church what thousands mercy crave—
'Holiest of holy, look ye down and save!'

41.

"That year their veriest miracle they wrought;
Oh! what a sight, my God, my God! there lay
A child, sick, weeping, beautiful as thought
St. John can image; plaintive did he pray—
'From my young sight, sweet saints, the darkness lift,
My lamb, the tender-horned, shall be my gift.'

42.

"While sobs resound, and tears abounding flow,
Above the prostrate multitude descend[17]
The wondrous shrines, majestically slow;
Scarce doth the cord its angel course suspend,
With burst of winds that through the forest fly—
'Help, help, ye blest, come down,' one-voiced they cry

43.

" When in his sponsor-mother's arms the child
His fragile hands puts forth in sightless quest,
Touching the sacred chest, where undefiled
The righteous Maries' bones in honour rest,
As saving spar the shipwrecked sailor grasps,
He the blest ark with hold ecstatic clasps.

44.

" Scarce o'er the relic bones his hands are spread,
He cries (I yet behold his ecstacy),
With the live faith in guileless childhood bred,
'The shrines miraculous, I see, I see,
My long-wept mother manifest I view—
Oh! bring my young-horned lamb, my altar due.'

45.

" God thrive thee, gracious maiden, rich and long
In weal and beauty—but if noxious bite
Of dog or wolf, or snake with poisoned tongue,
Thy fair flesh harm,—or if misfortune blight
Thy youthful strength—oh! to these saints repair—
Thou'lt not unanswered weep thy sorrows there."

46.

Thus breathed itself the placid eve away—
The wain unhorsed cast shadows quaint and far
From its huge wheels—across the moor its lay
Floats evening bell in hymns irregular,
What time the pensive owlet tunes his tale
To mate the sorrows of the nightingale.

47.

While brightening moonbeams silver leaf and plain,
"Dare I," resumed the youth, "a race recite,
Where once I dreamed the laurel crown to gain?"
"Most welcome," answers, panting with delight,
The slender damsel, who, past blessing blest,
Bends artless nearer to her eager guest.

48.

"It fell at Nismes, at beauteous Nismes, Mirelle,
That games were held, and the whole course along
The people gathered thicker than e'er fell
The hair on maiden's neck—the runners strong
In limb, a multitude, bareheaded, bare
Of foot and shoulders, to the lists repair.

49

"But soon the rivals Lagalante espy,
Great king of runners, lunged as stag, and fleet,
Marseilles in him could all the world defy—
Sure his wide fame hath found e'en thy retreat;
Provence ne'er trained, nor Italy could boast
A son who neared him at the winning-post.

50.

"Like John de Cosca was he legged and thighed,
(Her seneschal proud Provence smiles to name,)[18]
And brazen plates he owned, a mail of pride,
Whereon his feats were consecrate to fame;
Scarves, many-dyed so rich in warp and woof,
You'd vow he'd nailed the rainbow to his roof.

51.

"But straight the groups dismayed their heads abase
And clothe again—with mighty Lagalante
Who dares to cope?— a lad of slender race,
Le Cri, yet not of limb inelegant,
Who but this day to Nismes his cattle drave,
Steps forth the dreaded champion to brave.

52.

"Chance lured me there—but wherefore mad exclaim,
'By all the Saints, I, too, know how to run?'
My folly quick reproves me, whilst my name
Demands the crowd—cheer up—retreat is none;
As yet young partridges alone I tire,
On stubble slopes, where nought but oaks admire.

53.

"Forward I must, whom Lagalante addressed:
'Poor stripling, know'st thou yet the deftest ties
Thy legs to brace?' meanwhile the scoffer pressed
In silken hosen his capacious thighs
Of volumed muscle—round the waist they hold,
Chiming to every step, six bells of gold.

54.

"Each 'tween his lips a twig of willow bears,
His breath to calm, and each for quick embrace
The friendly hand presents—impatience glares
From out each eye—the blood from out each face.
Poised o'er the base the signal each desires,
It comes, nor quicker dart the lightning fires.

55.

"The plain we gripe, while each the mob inflames,
A dusty whirlwind soon our springs enclouds,
The air impels us, vapour breathe our frames.
What strain! what gasping struggle! while the crowd
Our burst behold, and how in line we vault,
They think us banded for some town's assault.

56.

"At length (oh fatal haste) I start before,
In fervour visionary as the fire
That feigns to light and lead—untrained to store
My force, I stumble, and my hopes expire:
Ill means to grasp a victory I trust,
A breathless log I roll, and bite the dust.

57.

"Like mounted dancers who our fairs delight,[20]
With measured step the others brush the green,
Still the Marsillian holds the prize his right,
(Some say from birth he lacked the cumbering spleen,)
Yet, damsel, was this hero doomed to see
A greater in the Mourian lad Le Cri.[21]

58.

"As through the surging multitude they wing,
The goal with breath precursive they embrace;
Would thou, sweet maiden, could'st have seen the spring
Of young Le Cri—on mountain, plain, or chase,
Ne'er stag, nor hare could vaunt like sinewy bound—
Howling like wolf, Lagalante stamps the ground.

59.

"Le Cri, with glory instant o'er his brow,
The pillared goal infolds—around him run
The hosts of Nismes, his name and land to know.
The silvery plate seems bright with double sun,
The cymbals clash, the hautboys' boom replies,
The humble victor takes the shining prize."

60.

"But Lagalante? What of him?" asked Mirelle.
"Crouched and all hid behind the friendly dust
That upwards thousand busy feet compel,
'Twixt his closed knees his hands convulsive thrust,
His wounded soul his sullied honour thrills,
Tears mingling with the drops his brow distils.

61.

"Whom thus salutes Le Cri—'Cheer up, friend, cheer,
The tavern cradles best mischance like thine—
Mirth fill to-day, to-morrow's all too near,
For sorrows that should melt in generous wine;
Come, come, not only in the lists of Nismes,
The sun for both with sign of conquest beams.'

62.

"But with wan look the speaker he repels,
And from his flesh, which quivers yet and throbs,
He tears the girdle with the golden bells;
'Take it,' he saith, 'Time me as others robs,
Thou whom thy youth with grace of swan hath dight,
Must bear the chieftain's badge by honoured right.'

63.

"He spoke, and in the shouting throng forlorn,
As ash tree of its coronal ungraced,
The mighty runner fled the dreaded scorn—
No more the applauding theatre he paced—
St. John's and Peter's games the chief deplore,
Who long unchallenged all their honours wore."

64.

Thus Vincent 'fore the Cornel Croft rehearsed
At large the gatherings of his young career;
His cheek was scarlet, his dark eyes conversed
With jets of flame, and, as his voice the ear,
His action held the eye, so full his strain,
As aftermath that drinks the summer rain.

65.

The crickets on their tufted pleasaunce hush
Full oft their songs his melody to list;
In forest far, or in the o'erhanging bush,
The wondering nightingale and owl desist.
In her cool bower entranced and rapt, Mirelle
Had her glad vigil kept till matin bell.

66.

"Mother," she said, "'tis strange, I ween, from state
Like basket-pleachers' ought should come so bright—
Winter's drear nights to sleep to dedicate
Is well, but truly now 'tis all too light—
Oh! let us hear him, hear him o'er and o'er;
My nights, my life, I'd give to his sweet lore."

NOTES ON CANTO I.*

Note 1. Title.

["The Cornel Croft." In the French 'le Mas des Micocouliers.' The word *mas* is Provençal, and signifies a country house or farm, and may have had a more extensive meaning, if, as some conjecture, Marseilles takes its name from Mas Salyum, or settlement or habitation of the Salyans. The Micocoulier, in Provençal *Falabréguié*, is a large tree common in the south of France, its fruit being held in some esteem. It is the *Celtis Australis* of Linnæus, which Loudon translates *nettle tree*. Finding that neither the Provençal nor French name would be very tractable for my verse, and the English ambiguous, without being euphonious, I have adopted the title of Cornel Croft. The Cornel tree, in French Cornouiller, attains in some parts of France a great size, and yields a fruit held in about the same esteem as that of the Micocoulier.]

Note 2.

["Mirelle." In Provençal, Mireio; in French, Mireille.]

Note 3, stanza 1, line 2.

"O'er Cray her steps I'd trace." Cray, properly La Crau, pronounced Crow. I have ventured on this change as better adapted to English verse and associations. La Crau (from the Greek τραῦος dry), is a vast and flinty plain, bounded to the north by the chain of the Alpines, to the south by the sea, to the east by the pools of Martigue, to the west by the Rhone. It is the Arabia Petræa of France. It is intersected by the Canal of Craponne, which sprinkles it with oases. [Such is a translation of a note in the original. Arthur Young describes it thus:—

"By the name La Crau is to be understood the most singular stony desert in Europe, or perhaps in the world. It is about five leagues in length and breadth, and contains probably twenty to twenty-five square leagues; twenty make 136,780 English acres. It is composed entirely of shingle, being so uniform a mass of round stones, some the size of a man's head, but of all sizes less, that the newly thrown up

* The Notes within brackets are added by the Translator.

shingle of a sea-shore is hardly less free from soil; beneath these surface stones is, not so much a sand as a cemented rubble, a small mixture of loam. Vegetation is rare and miserable; some of the absynthium and lavender, so low and poor as scarcely to be recognised, and two or three miserable grasses, with Centaurea Calycitropes and Solstitialis, were the principal plants I could find. I believe, however, that the Eryngium may be found there. I searched for Lolium Perenne (ray grass), but could not find one plant, or any trace of it, from which I conclude that it had been so eaten down as not to be discoverable at this season (August). After passing over some miles of this extraordinary desert, I enquired of my guides if the remainder was like what I had seen; they answered that it was the same throughout in respect of soil and vegetation. The only use made of the uncultivated portion is in the pasturing, during winter, of a vast number of sheep (nearly a million, I was told, but I doubt this), which feed on the mountains of Provence during the summer, on the borders of Barcelonette and of Piedmont. If it is to be supposed that the number of these sheep is a million, the number of acres must greatly exceed that which I have named." After giving an account of the works of irrigation which have been carried out in La Crau, he proceeds to say, that in consequence of these waters having been brought to a country which stood so much in need of them, some improvements have been effected. Large breadths of ground have been cleared and planted with vines, and with olive and mulberry trees, and converted into arable and meadow land. Corn had not succeeded, but the meadows which he saw were among the most extraordinary sights which nature could offer, so striking was the contrast between the lands left in their natural state, and those which had been irrigated; the latter being covered with a rich verdure of clover, chicory, and avena elatior.

The allusions made in the poem to the crops of corn are justified by the progress which has been established in its culture since the time at which Arthur Young visited the country in 1788.]

Note 4, stanza 7, line 4.

"Yon row of pillared clouds o'er Maguélonne." Maguélonne, on the coast of the department of l'Hérault. Of this city, an ancient Greek colony, there remains nothing but a Church in ruins. M. Moquin-Tandon, member of the Institute, and poet of Languedoc, has composed, under the title of Carya Magalonensis, an ingenious chronicle, in the "langue romane," of the principal events of which this city was the theatre during the early part of the 14th century. (See note on canto 8, stanza 17.)

Note 5, stanza 10, line 1.

"'But, caspitello,' quick exclaimed the youth." Caspitello, or caspi, an interjection expressive of surprise, equivalent to "dame," "tudieu."

Note 6, stanza 10, line 4.

"The maids of Baux appear." The maids of Baux (les Baux) a village in ruins, the ancient capital of the princely house of Baux. Three leagues from Arles, on the rocky summit of a spur of the Alpines (a row of limestone hills, remarkable for their utter nakedness), are scattered the remains of a town, which, by the grandeur of its site, the antiquity of its foundation, and the importance of the part which it has played in the annals of the country, attracts the steps of the traveller, exalts the imagination of the artist, offers an extensive field to the curiosity of the archæologist, exciting, and often provoking and confounding, their learning and sagacity. (Jules Canonge. *Histoire de la Ville des Baux en Provence.*)

As the name of this poetic locality recurs several times in the poem, I believe that the reader will peruse with pleasure the following description, borrowed from the same author:—

"At last I arrived at the opening of a narrow valley; I bowed before a stone cross, the broken remains of which hallow the road, and as I looked up again, my eye rested in astonishment on such a group of towers and walls, perched on the top of a rock, as I had never seen, except in those works in which the genius of painting was inspired by the most fabulous conceptions of Ariosto. But if my astonishment was great at the first view, it was doubled when I had clambered up an eminence from which I saw the whole town deployed before me. It was a picture of desolate grandeur, such as we dream of in reading the Prophets; it was that of which I had not supposed the existence, an almost monolithic town. Those who first conceived the idea of making their habitation on this rock, cut out their shelter in its sides; this new system of architecture was adjudged good by their successors, for the mass was vast and compact. A city soon proceeded from it, as a statue from a block of stone, which art makes to spring into life—an imposing town, with its fortifications, its chapels, and its hospitals, a town where man appeared to have made his home for eternity. The empire of this city extended far and wide: brilliant feats of arms conquered for it a noble place in history, but it was not on this account more durable than so many others less solidly built."

The story of the poem commences at the foot of these ruins.

Note 7, stanza 16, line 4.

"From Valabrègue." Valabrègue, a city situated on the left bank of the Rhone, between Avignon and Tarascon.

Note 8, stanza 24, line 3.

"And thou blue-misted slope of Font Vielle." Font Vieille, a village situated in a valley of the Alpines, in the environs of Arles.

Note 9, stanza 28, line 6.

["Its organ broken, out of tune and gear." I have had difficulty in trying to render the original of this passage. The old man's expression is simply "les miroirs sont crevés." A note in the original has enabled me to approach the author's meaning. He says that in Provençal the name of "Mirau miroirs" is given to two small shining membranes which the cigale has in its abdomen, with which, by friction, it produces the sound designated its song. It is said proverbially of a person whose voice is cracked by age, "Elle a les miroirs crevés." But to an English reader the "cigale" (*cigala tettigonia*), which will be found hereafter as an object of pursuit by a child, requires some description. The cigale is a kind of large grasshopper, which frequents the trees. Its note lasts during the heat of the day, and is like a soft hissing. Millin, in his *Voyages dans les Départements du Midi de la France*, speaks of its "deafening cry," and remarks with astonishment, that Homer, Anacreon, Theocritus, Virgil, Horace, and so many other authors have agreed in honouring with the name of song the insupportable noise which these insects make on the hottest days, and in celebrating its melody. They have been esteemed sacred to Apollo and the Muses, to whom they were considered indebted for the sweetness of their song. Epigrams have been composed in their honour, and young women have raised tombs to them, and given expression in tender verses to their grief at their loss. The note, however, which they produce from their musical throats is not melodious, as St. Ambrose asserts, but may be likened to the sound of the rattle which is used for calling to mass during Holy Week. The noise is so annoying that it is often impossible to converse under the shade of mulberry trees, where these insects are generally found. He adds, their music is of a kind which the north of France need not envy the south. They are not, however, confined to the south, as I have found them in Touraine, but there they are scarce; their note, when first heard, very striking.]

Note 10, song, stanza 1.

["Brave Baillie Suffren rules our fleet." The following account of Baillie Suffren, translated from the "Encyclopédie des Gens du Monde," will account for the pride with which his name is mentioned by a writer of Provence. It is given entire, on account of his victories having been, as related, in part or in whole achieved over the English. The conflict which forms the burden of the song may be supposed imaginary. The worthy Baillie seems to have been no great adept in capturing, whatever his skill may have been in battering, his enemy's ships:—

"Pierre André Suffren, of St. Tropez, generally known by the name of the Baillie de Suffren, was born at the Chateau of St. Cannat, in the department of Bouches du Rhone, on the 13th July, 1726. Being a younger son, his parents,

who destined him to the navy, procured his reception into the Order of Malta. At the age of 17 he joined the marine guards, and made his first campaign against the English. His courage and coolness were subjects of remark ever after this commencement. Made Ensign in 1747, Suffren took part in the battle of Belle-Ile. His ship 'le Monarque' having been captured, he was taken to England. The peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, however, in the following year, restored him to liberty. War having broken out afresh, Suffren, who had been appointed to 'l'Océan,' was surprised in a Portuguese port by an English squadron. He was made, in 1767, Captain of a frigate, but France being then at peace, he went to Malta, and made several cruises against the people of Barbary. Promoted in 1772 to the rank of 'Capitaine de vaisseau,' he afterwards commanded 'le Fantasque,' in the squadron of Count d'Estaing. Suffren had already attained the age of 55, when a more brilliant career opened for him. Being sent, in 1781, with a squadron of five ships to the defence of the Cape of Good Hope, he attacked, in the port of Praya de San Iago, one of the Cape de Verd Islands, Commodore Johnson, who commanded a superior force, and gloriously sustained the honour of his flag. After having revictualled at the Cape, he made sail, at the head of eleven ships, for the Indian seas, where the English Admiral, Hughes, awaited him with an equal force. The two fleets met on the 19th January, 1792, off Sadras, on the Coromandel coast. The French gained the advantage, and remained masters of the scene of battle. A second engagement before Bentacolo (Bencoulen?), in Ceylon, had no decisive result. The same was the case with a third engagement off Negapatam. Suffren then returned to Goudelour (Cuddalore?), in which town Hyder Ali came to meet him at the head of his army, from his desire to embrace a great man. Meanwhile, having received reinforcements from the Isle of France, Suffren set sail for Trincomalee, the capital of Ceylon. He arrived before this town on the 26th August, and landed, on the same night, 2,550 men, who opened the trenches on the 27th. The town and citadel surrendered on the morning of the 30th, and delivered to the French a magnificent harbour, eighty guns, and an abundance of provisions. Scarcely two hours had elapsed after the conclusion of the capitulation, when the English squadron was signalled; Suffren proceeded to meet it, but, being badly supported, he had to sustain alone the shock of the whole fleet, and to see his ships dismantled, and riddled with shot. His ammunition being exhausted, after firing 1,800 rounds, he continued to fire blank cartridges, till the night, and the approach of his reserve, obliged the English to sheer off. Suffren sailed to winter at 'Achem;' here having learned that 'Goudelour' was besieged, he made sail for this town with 15 ships, the enemy having 18. The two fleets remained in sight of each other three days; Suffren at length gave the signal for the attack, and night alone separated the combatants. The English profited by it to make their retreat, and the blockade was raised. While these things were doing, peace had been signed at Versailles. Suffren, recalled to France,

re-entered Toulon the 29th March, 1784, after three years' absence, and was rewarded with the title of Vice-Admiral, and a glorious popularity. Being named, in 1787, for the command of a fleet which was collecting at Brest, he was preparing to join, when he was attacked by a serious illness, and died in Paris on the 8th December, 1788. The title of Baillie had been conferred on him by the Grand Master of the Order of Malta, during his Indian campaign. This title was given to a seniorial judge charged with the administration and execution of justice in a district called Baillage. Some of these judges were entitled to wear a sword. At the present time they only figure on the stage in comic operas, where they always play a ridiculous part."

In the German "Conversazions-Lexicon" he is described as of a martial appearance, as evincing great knowledge of his profession, as mild and amiable, but an iron, though impartial, disciplinarian.

Near the place of his birth a member of his family has carved an isolated rock into the form of a ship, called "the Hero," after that in which the Baillie served.]

Note 11, song, stanza XII.

["Anoint them with the oil of Aix." A popular French expression for a sound drubbing or oaken towel, is "de l'huile de cotret," to which the original "oignons-les ferme avec l'huile d'Aix," probably refers. The best oil, and, I may add, the best olives for the table, come from Aix.]

Note 12, song, stanza XXV.

"Thus sung one eve a Martigan." Martigan, inhabitant of Martigue, a singular village of Provence, almost exclusively populated by fishermen. It is built on small islands surrounded by the sea and numerous pools, being reticulated by canals, by way of streets, which has obtained for it the name of the Venice of Provence. It is the birthplace of Gérard Tenque, founder of the Order of the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem.

Note 13, stanza 33, line 1.

"'Lang syne my lads,' he said, 'when Martha span.'" When Martha span. A proverbial expression, meaning in better times, in the good old times, in allusion, perhaps, to Martha, the entertainer of Christ, who after having, according to the legend, delivered Tarascon from the monster which ravaged the territory, finished her days in this country, inhabiting a small house on the banks of the Rhone, and modestly working at her distaff in the midst of her converts. [The like saying is applied in Provence to one Bertha, either the Countess of Gérard de Roussillon, the hero of a very popular romance of the middle ages, or to one known as Berthe au grand pied. It seems singular that the saying should

be current in parts of Switzerland, especially in the Canton de Vaux, of another Bertha, queen of Rudolph of Burgundy, who is said to have spun her husband's clothing.]

Note 14, stanza 35, line 5.

"As each to each two cabridelles will bend." Cabridelle (*Aster tripolium*, Lin.) a starwort common in the marshy lands of the south of France [as in those of Great Britain also].

Note 15, stanza 39, line 2.

"Or from the oaks of Marragues (pigmy tribe)
Crop scarlet-blooded kermes."

The oaks of Marragues, the dwarf oak (*agarrus*) which is the sole tree found in some of the lands of the south, thence called garrigues. [On these trees is found the kermes, or cochenille du chêne. This small insect has given many words to several languages; amongst others, to the Italian carmesi, cremesino; to the French cramoisi; and to our own, crimson. To the mistaken supposition at one time entertained of its being a worm, are due the French words vermeil and vermillon, and our own vermillion. From its Arab name, scharlach, are derived the German scharlach, the French écarlate, and scarlet. It is found in great quantities in the south of France, and, until the introduction of the cochineal from America, was an article of great trade. It is found larger in La Crau than elsewhere, and is still collected there at the beginning of the summer. The women who make its collection their occupation, let their nails grow to enable them more easily to detach it from the branches.]

Note 16, stanza 40, line 1.

"Hast thou not seen les Saintes, poor maid, nor isle
Of the three Maries?"

Les saintes, Les saintes Maries de la mer, a small village of 543 inhabitants, situated on the island of Carmargne, on the sea coast, between the mouths of the Rhone. A venerable and poetic tradition attracts to this place yearly, on the 25th of May, a countless concourse of pilgrims from all parts of Provence and Lower Languedoc.

The legend runs, that after the death of Christ, the Jews forced some of his most fervent disciples to embark in a disabled boat, and delivered them to the mercy of the waves. The following old French canticle describes this scene:—

Les Juifs
Entrez, Sara dans la nacelle,
Lazare, Marthe, et Maximin,

Cléon, Trophime, Saturnin,
Les trois Maries et Marcelle,
Eutrope et Martial, Sidonie avec Joseph (d'Arimathée)
Vous périrez dans cette nef.
Allez sans voile, et sans cordage,
Sans mât, sans ancre, sans timon,
Sans alimens, sans aviron :
Allez faire un triste naufrage,
Retirez vous d'ici : laissez nous en repos
Allez crever parmi les flots.

Guided by Providence, the barque succeeded in reaching Provence, at the extreme end of the island of Camargne. The poor exiles, having miraculously escaped the perils of the sea, dispersed themselves through southern Gaul, and became its first Apostles.

Mary Magdalene, one of the three Maries, retired into the desert of Sainte Baume, to weep over her sins ; the two others, Mary Jacobea (wife of Cleophas), mother of St. James the Less, and Mary Salome, mother of St. James the Greater and of St. John the Evangelist, accompanied by their servant Sara, after having converted to the new faith some of the neighbouring populations, returned to die at the place of their disembarcation.

M. B. Lauriens, who has recounted and drawn in the "Journal d'Illustration" the pilgrimage of the three Maries, adds : "It is said that a prince, whose name is not mentioned, knowing that the bodies of the three Maries reposed in this spot, caused a church to be built there, in the form of a citadel, to protect it from invasion by pirates. He also caused to be built round the church, houses and ramparts, to ensure the safety of the inhabitants." The buildings which are seen at the present time answer perfectly to this last tradition.

"In 1448, after having heard a sermon on the happiness of Provence in possessing the remains of the three Holy Maries, King René visited the church built to their honour, and had excavations made in search of their bones. The success of his undertaking was proved by the miraculous odour which exhaled at the moment that each body was uncovered. It would be useless to describe all the honours rendered to these relics, or the care bestowed on them."

[The truth, however, of this legend which has been so cherished by the Provençaux, has been denied, and satisfactorily disproved, at least in some particulars. The most celebrated writers on Scripture subjects argue that St. Mary Magdalene died at Ephesus. According to some curious researches made in the 15th century by an inhabitant of St. Zacharias (a place near St. Baume and St. Maximin), it appears that at a time when the Saracens destroyed the monastery of the Order of the Capianites, near St. Maximin, in the 8th century, one of the nuns, named Magdalene, escaped the massacre of which her sisters were the

victims. She concealed herself in one of the grottoes of the neighbouring mountains, where she lived on wild fruits, and led a life of such piety, that the grotto, sanctified by her residence and good works, was called Sainte Baume. This nun died at St. Maximin, the seat of the Order of St. Benedict, and was buried there. At first only the Capianite sister Magdalene was honoured at St. Maximin, and in the dioceses of Aix and Marseilles, but shortly afterwards some Greek monks arrived in France, and spread new opinions respecting the founders of the Churches in that kingdom, who they declared to have been disciples of Jesus Christ, or missionaries sent by the Apostles. They professed to have read in their Chronicles that St. Denis, of Paris, was St. Dionysius the Areopagite; that St. Trophimus, of Arles, was a disciple of St. Paul, and that St. Paul himself had preached the faith in Spain. From the love of the marvellous these opinions were seized with avidity, and others were founded on them. It was asserted as a fact that Lazarus, Maximin, one of the 72 disciples, Sidonia, the blind-born, Magdalene and Martha, came to Provence to propagate the faith; Magdalene the Capianite was then forgotten, and her worship replaced by that of the Magdalene of the Gospel, who, it was asserted, had performed penance at St. Baume, and had been buried at St. Maximin.

Some writers suppose that the Churches of Provence were founded in the 3rd century, that St. Maximin probably lived towards the end of that century, and that St. Trophimus, the first Bishop of Arles, was sent into France with St. Denis of Paris, and St. Paul of Narbonne, about the year 240. They support this opinion with the authority of Gregory of Tours, and conclude that the Bishoprics of Marseilles and Aix must have been established by St. Trophimus, and that the names Lazarus and Maximin must have been those of the first pastors of these churches, unless it can be proved that these saints were the disciples of Christ, or sent by His Apostles.

The Church of St. Maximin contains relics attributed to the Scripture Magdalene, and she is found constantly represented in painting and sculpture. In a crypt beneath the church ares hown the heads of St. Maximin and the Magdalene. The first has been remade since the revolution; the face of the latter is covered with transparent horn: it is the head of a mummy with the teeth well preserved. The sacristan used to point out the place where our Lord, according to tradition, touched the sinner. (Millin, vol. I., ch. 78.)]

Note 17, stanza 42, line 2.

"Descend
The wondrous shrines."

"The choir of the church presents the peculiarity of being formed on three floors [as is described in the text, canto XII., stanza 9], a crypt, which is pointed out as being the actual spot of the ancient oratory of the Saints; a sanctuary,

raised higher than usual; and an upper chapel, where the shrines of the relics are exposed. . . . . However, innumerable wax tapers, held by those present, are lighted, and the capstan, the chain of which secured the shrine of the relics, unwinding itself, this shrine descends slowly from the upper chapel into the choir. This is the auspicious moment for the miracles; an immense chorus of supplications is raised on all sides. 'Holy Maries! cure my child,' such is the piercing cry which arises to draw tears from the coldest heart. Every one awaits, amidst the singing of psalms, the moment when it will be possible to place on the shrine a poor blind or epileptic person, and when it is effected each believes his desire granted." (B. Laurens.)

Note 18, stanza 50, line 1.

"Like John de Cossa was he legged and thighed,
(Her seneschal proud Provence smiles to name)."

John de Cossa, a Neapolitan nobleman, a follower of King René I., Grand Seneschal of Provence, who died in 1476. John de Cossa is very popular at Tarascon, where the people attribute to him the building of the steeple of St. Martha. He is buried in the crypt of this church, and his recumbent statue surmounts his tomb.

Note 19, stanza 53, line 2.

"Poor stripling, knowest thou yet the deftest ties
Thy legs to brace?"

Taken from a provincial expression, which means—Do you know how to prepare yourself for a fleet race?

Note 20, stanza 57, line 1.

"Like the trained dancers, who our fairs delight." [I have been unable to render strictly the original, which is thus translated into French: "Mais eux deux comme dansent à Aix les chevaux frux (li chioan frus)."] Chevaux frus are horses made of painted cardboard, in use at public rejoicings in Provence, and especially at Aix at the time of the Fête-Dieu. The horsemen tie them to their waists, and go about dancing to the sound of the tambourine.

Note 21, stanza 57, line 6.

"A greater in the Mourian lad Le Cri." Mouries is a village to the south of the Alpines.

CANTO II.

THE LEAF-GATHERING.

Mirelle gathers the mulberry leaves for her silkworms—By chance, Vincent, the basket-mender, passes by on an adjoining path—The young girl calls him—The lad runs to her, and to assist her climbs with her into the tree—Their conversation—Vincent draws a comparison between his sister Vincenette and Mirelle—The nest of titmice—The broken bough—Mirelle and Vincent fall from the tree—The girl declares her love—Violent outburst of the young man—The Golden Goat—The fig-tree of Vaucluse—Mirelle is called away by her mother—Emotion and separation of the lovers.

I.

Sing, sing, ye silkmaids—'tis the hour of song [1]
That culls the leaves, while soft your silkworms sleep [2]
To their third life—the mulberry branches throng
The season-quickened maidens, as they leap
From spray to spray, like swarming bees that spoil
The rosemary that loves the flinty soil.

2.

Sing, sing, ye silkmaids, while the bough ye bare;
Mirelle was there, the morning breathing May,
To crop her harvest. With coquettish air
Two cherries pendant from her ears betray
Her rustic sense of maiden ornament;
Thither this morn anew is Vincent bent.

3.

High on his head a scarlet cap he bears,
(Such marks the borderers of the Latian sea,)
Whereon a cock's plume jauntily he wears;
The basking adders from his pathway flee,
So brisk his step—the flints before him leap,
As his staff rattles 'midst the slumbering heap.

4.

From out her bosky glades Mirelle reproves,
"O Vincent, whither with such speed away?"
He turns and hastens to the mulberry groves,
And sees the maid—like crested woodlark gay—
Perched on a shaded bough, and quick demands,
"How come the leaves, Mirelle, to fill thine hands?"

5.

"The sprays but grudgingly their treasures cede."
"But dare I aid thee?" Blithely she complies—
While rings her laugh from high o'er grove and mead;
He, while the clover bruised beneath him lies,
Nimbly as squirrel swarms the love-full tree;
"Mirelle, thy father hath no child save thee."

6.

"Bend low the branches, make their summits mine—
Quick, let me work;" and through her gentle palm
Trails the lithe bough, as maiden milks the kine;
"And sure to labour fellowship is balm,"
She says, "and want of consort want of zest."
"True," says the lad, "the work that's shared goes best."

7.

"When in our far-off deep secluded cot,
No sound we hear but Rhone's impatient roar,
That frets the shingle, 'tis an irking lot:
Hours, days, weeks, months, so sad and drear his shore,
Till summer laughs, and then, my sire and I,
From farm to farm our merry calling ply.

8.

"But when again the holly berries glare,
The wintry days less long than evening watch,
Around our hearth, in smouldering faggots spare,
While goblins mewl and whistle at the latch;
No lamp to cheer, our hoard of talk outgrown,
What have we left but sleep, we two alone?"

9.

"But where," the damsel sympathizing cries,
"Where is thy mother?" "She in death doth sleep."
Speechless awhile he sits with saddened eyes,
Then adds, "While yet our Vincenette did keep,
So young, our cabin and its simple store,
All smiled for me." "Nay, Vincent, prithee more,—

10.

"Thou hast a sister?" "Yea, a child sister, rare
And subtle-handed in all fitting things;
Alas! too much—for, working at Beaucaire
With gang of mowers, at the Royal Springs,
Such trust her neatness and address beget,
A patron sought her, and I mourn her yet."

11.

"And art thou like thy sister?" "I?—oh! no;
Far, far unlike; for she is blondly fair,
And I, you see, am darker than the sloe:—
But dost thou know whose image she doth bear?
Your heads erect, and tresses, thick and sleek
As myrtle leaves, of twinship seem to speak.

12.

"But thou, Mirelle, hast greater skill to tire
Its gear's transparent gauze around thy brow;
Like thee, she lacks nor charms nor sprightly fire,—
But how exceeding beauteous art thou!"
Mirelle, not half achieved her harvest toil,
Murmurs his name, and lets her branch recoil.

13.

Sing, sing, silkmaidens, 'tis the hour of song,
That culls the leaves, while soft your silkworms sleep
To their third life—the mulberry branches throng
The season-quickened maidens, as they leap
From spray to spray, like greedy bees that spoil
The rosemary that loves the flinty soil.

14.

"Am I then passing pretty in thine eyes,
E'en past thy sister?" asks the musing child.
"Ah! so, and far, far more," the lad replies.
"What have I more?" "O Mother, undefiled,
Can the poor wren to match the goldfinch sing,
Its beauty pair and elegance of wing?"

15.

"But say yet on." "Ah! my poor sister ne'er
The leek's smooth whiteness shall thy cheek beset;
The eyes of Vincenette in blueness pair
The limpid wave, while thine disgrace the jet;
And when for me they beam, my bosom fires
As when my brain the goblet spiced inspires.

16.

"When the loved child with supple voice and clear
Warbled our country's magic Peyronelle,[3]
Entranced I hung o'er nature's sonneteer;
But from thy lips each syllable's a spell
Thou work'st for me, that past all music's art
My ear enraptures, and provokes my heart.

17.

"When o'er the sultry lands my Vincenette,
My sister, tripped with hue of tawny date,
The sun his brand upon her forehead set:
Thou, beauteous one, wert formed as delicate
As blooms of asphodel—nor summer rude
Dare his swarth hand on thy fair brow intrude.

18.

"Then, as the sudden freshet of a brook,
Is that poor child perhaps ungainly slim;
Her stature in one year its measure took:
But thou art round in figure, bust, and limb."
Blushing again Mirelle remits her toil,
Murmurs his name, and lets her branch recoil.

19.

Sing, sing, silkmaidens, while the bough ye bare;
Thus this sweet pair so innocent and gay
In flowery youth, hid in their leafy lair
Of netted branches, love's first draughts essay,
What time the winter on the mountain height
With quick retreat surrenders to the light.

20.

High on the mouldering towers or grizzly crags,
Where haunt the spirits of the chiefs of Baux,
Their place of princedom, bright as beacon flags
The sakir spreads his pinions of snow
To giant space, to sparkle in the blaze
That the dwarf oak's decrepitude betrays.

21.

"But, ah! we've idled and but gathered shame,"
She says with pouting air. "This vaunting droll,
Who vowed to aid, my labour turns to game;
Come, come, our hands we'll quicken and control,
Lest chance my mother scowl on me and say,
I'm giddy yet to dream of marriage day.

22.

"Pluck on, and boasting moderate, poor friend,
If thou did'st hire thyself to work at wage,
With scarce thy quintal cropped thy week would end,—
Thou'dst sup on regardelles, my faith I gage."
"And dost thou count me for a gouk, Mirelle?"
Murmured the lad, nor hid his torture well.

23.

"Then for a race, who fastest works to see;—
Off, off!" Their ardent hands engage the bough,
And, maddening, tear its summer from the tree;
No converse more, no lover dalliance now—
(The bleating sheep must lose what others eat):
Betimes the branches show their task complete.

24.

Thus a quick halt their labour earns—ah! well—
Youth is a pleasant pastime—as they throw
Their gathered treasures in their canvas cell, [below)
(Through its hooped mouth their hands plunged deep
Around each other once their fingers coil,
So slender hers, his burning with their toil.

25.

They start—the stripling and the simple lass,
With love's complexion either cheek bedight;
Each feels alike some strange enchantment pass
Through every sense, half doubt and half delight:
But from the labour as she draws her arm,
In mute affright, he questions her alarm.

26.

"What pains thee thus? Some wasp, perhaps, that lay
Crouched 'neath a leaf thy tender hand hath stung?"
She whispers sunken-browed, "I cannot say."
Then from another tree the leaves they wrung
With eyes that feign indifference conversed,
Each watching each for who should laugh the first.

27.

Quick beat their hearts, anew as pattering rain
Thick fall the leaves, inviting soon their care
To force their booty in the sack again;
Then mix their hands, the swarthy and the fair,
Each nears the other, be it chance or choice—
The more they work the more their hearts rejoice.

28.

Sing, sing, ye silkmaids, as the bough ye strip,—
"See, see," bursts forth Mirelle in joyous cry;
"What see'st thou?" And with finger on her lip,
Blythe as when vine leaf tempts the butterfly,
She points a branch, 'fore that whereon she cowers,
With arm outstretched—"A nest, 'twill soon be ours."

29.

"Hush, hush," signed Vincent, who, with breath repressed,
Noiseless as sparrow's footfall on the eaves,
Bounded from branch to branch, to where the nest
Lay in such chink as freakish nature leaves
Twixt trunk and bough—the orifice betrays
The birds in plume and strength of early days.

30.

While round a bough his legs tenacious meet,
Poised with one hand, with one the greenwood cell
He gently probes. Now slung to nearest seat,
With cheek of flame, "What booty?" asks Mirelle,
With bursting whisper. "Ah! but see I true,"
He says, "they're titmice by their heads of blue."

31.

Round rings her girlish laughter—"List to me;
Hast thou not heard when two in concert find
A bird's nest in the summit of a tree,
Of mulberry or elsesoever kind—
Such Holy Church that year in Marriage ties?
'A proverb,' says my father, 'never lies.'"

32.

"Yes," rejoins Vincent; "but with this proviso,
That all their hope shall weep itself away,
If, ere the brood are caged, one truant flies."
"Oh, Heavenly Powers!" she cries, "beware, and stay
Their feverish wings thus feathered with our fate."
The youth's soft words her fears reciprocate.

33.

"The choicest place to imprison them would be
Thy boddice."—"Give them, give them quick—'tis good."
Again his hand explores the hollow tree,
Then issues forth swollen with the downy brood:
Four yields it up. "How many?" she demands,
As up to Heaven she lifts her trembling hands.

34.

"Ah! the sweet nestlings!—pretty birdlets!—yes!
Oh! let me kiss you;" and her loving lips
With kisses more devour them than caress;
Till down her boddice each soft treasure slips.
To house its velvet guests its folds expand.
"Look, look," exclaims the lad, "once more thine hand."

35.

"Ah! the soft azure heads—the fledgling loves—
With their quick needle eyes." She now confines
Three more in bosom soft and fair as dove's,
Whose genial warmth around their smallness twines:
The birds contented snuggle breast to breast,
As if remitted to their cradle rest.

36.

"But, Vincent, come they yet?" "Yes." "Soon, I'll swear
By the blest Virgin, thou hast hand of fay."
"Good child, but know'st not tow'rds St. George's fair
The titmouse ten, twelve, fourteen eggs will lay.
But quick, again thine hand;" and forth he drew
The last unshelled. "Now, blessed retreat, adieu."

37.

Scarce is he from the bounding bough unlaced,
The birds she scarce hath delicately laid
Within her kerchief's lawn with flowerets traced,
When gathering tones of pain escape the maid,
While her pressed hands upon her bosom lie
In virgin guise, she calls, "I faint—I die!"

38.

She sobs, "They scratch—oh! how they scratch and prick—
Run, Vincent, run, some moments now they make,
Oh! that I say it, with commotion quick
The covert where a mother's part I take;"
For now the last developed of the brood
Stir up dissension 'midst the brotherhood.

39.

Thus in their narrow valley discontent
Confusion through the silly covey throws,
That each can't lodge and settle to his bent,
Their claws deal flesh-wounds while their wings deal blows,
Their surgings oft disastrous fall entail,
Or roll they down the shelvings of their vale.

40.

"Quickly, nay, quicker take them, Vincent, fly!"
And as the vine leaf trembles in the gale,
As heifer, when with blood the hornets dye
Its silken hide, will crouch, bound up, and wail,
So the poor daughter of the Cornel Farm;—
But Vincent speeds her passing woe to calm.

41.

Sing, sing, silkmaidens, while your bough ye bare,
While on her branch she weeps he's at her side,
And soothes with beauteous lips and words as fair—
"Sure a few stings and scratches can'st thou bide:
What if, like mine, it were thy lot to stray
Among the nettles barefoot day by day;

42.

"What then thy plaint?" The birds to lodge the while,
That in her bosom closely lay enhived,
His sailor cap he tenders with a smile;
E'en now her hand hath in her kirtle dived,
Puffed with the nest, out one by one they come:
Soon all sleep happy in their wider home.

43.

With eyes averted, and with head depressed,
The maiden struggles with her coy dismay—
Her tearful cheek is soon with smiles redressed;
As dew, which while the morn was gentle lay
Within the bindweed's bells in rolling pearls,
Now to the sun in rising incense curls.

44.

But hark! the bough beneath them rends and snaps,—
Moment of horror! shrieking up she starts,
And with bared arms the youth's strong neck enwraps,
As from the sturdy stock the offset parts;
Circling in twined embrace they downward hie,
And on the pliant trefoil guileless lie.

45.

Zephyrs and airs, from wheresoe'er ye breathe,
Rustling the leafy canopy above,
Cease your gay murmurs, and this pair enwreathe
In silence melting to their dream of love—
Ye reckless breezes gentlier sigh, beteem
Its brief enchantment to this golden dream.

46.

Thou in thy bed that chirpest, merry rill,
Flow softly, softly, nor so wanton rush,
And wake thy babbling pebbles—still, oh! still;
For these two souls thus co-illumined, hush!
Like bees that swarm, transmuted life they share,—
Oh! to the silent stars their rapture spare.

47.

But in an instant's flush up bounds Mirelle,
And from his dear embrace her arms untwines,
Ne'er on quince blossoms such dead pallor fell.
On the mossed bank, now side by side reclined,
Each looks on each—no word the silence breaks,
Till from his dream the basket-weaver wakes.

48.

"Thou art not hurt, Mirelle, my sweetest, say—
Shame of the grove—curst tree by Satan planned;
Thou Friday's bastard, blast thee foul decay,
And woodlice suck thy sap, till out the land
Thy master cast thee from his outraged sight."
She answers trembling with some new affright,—

49.

"Nor harm, nor hurt, I've gathered in my fall;
But as the nursling infant frets and cries—
Yet knows not why—mysterious pains appal
My every sense; they block my ears and eyes;
Seethe in my heart and kindle in my brain;
My blood rebellious bounds through every vein."

50.

"Mayhap," he soothes, "thy loving spirit grieves
At thought thy mother's chiding voice to meet,
That thou so long hast dallied with the leaves;
As I, time was, half rags, my truant feet
Bedaubed as blackamoor, would homeward trail
From mulberry hunt." "'Neath other fear I quail."

51.

"The sun, perchance, with wantonness of power,
Thy head hath struck; a sorceress, Tavène,
Dwells 'mid the crags of Baux—in mystic hour,
She sets a glass of water o'er the brain,
Instant the enchanted rays their torture cease,
The crystal seek, and all again is peace."

52.

"Ah! no," replied the envied child of Cray;
"We country girls are nurtured to deride
These frolics of the merry sun of May—
But why dissemble what I fail to hide—
Would'st thou then know my pain, and pity me,
O Vincent, Vincent, 'tis my love for thee."

53.

The river's bank along, the limpid air,
The lawn, the brake, with ancient willows hung,
With signs of rapt approval greet the pair.
"O Princess beauteous, but of cruel tongue,"
Exclaims the basket youth, "those words repeat,
And cast me stunned and helpless at thy feet.

54.

"What! thou love me? nay, mock not thus, Mirelle,
My life, though poor, yet hitherto so blest;
Nay, by God's mercy, strive not to compel
My faith, to what once cherished in my breast,
In torments quick would burn my life away;
O sweet Mirelle, such wanton mocking stay."

55.

"God from His paradise my guilty soul
Blot out if aught with lying lips I feign:
Go, know thee loved, that worketh not thy dole;
But if thy pride my humble love disdain,
'Tis I, Mirelle, who, nerveless for the strive,
At thy stern feet must gasp away my life."

56.

"Oh! not again mix bitterness like this,"
Cried Ambrose' son. "In mercy think, between
Us two must ever yawn a dark abyss.
Thou of the Cornel Croft art idol queen;
I, but of Valabrèque, a tramping boor,
That baskets twist to hawk from door to door."

57.

"If prince, or osier artist have my love,
What recks it me, so he my soul possess?"
She spoke with flush of maiden who hath wove
Since dawn the sheaf-bands; "In thy humble dress,
Would'st thou not drain its pulses from my blood,
Oh! why put on the beauty of a God?"

58.

As the charmed bird before its lure descends
In slow gyrations, 'fore the virgin's spell
He waves confounded.—"And are these thine ends?"
Abrupt he calls, "thou fairest sorceress, tell—
For 'tis thy witchcraft that, like fumes of wine,
My reeling soul confounds with words divine!

59.

"And know'st thou not the might of thine embrace
Has seared my soul with ever-climbing fires?
For though thy jests thou barbest, to disgrace
Me, simple pedlar, and my proud desires,
I love thee too, Mirelle, by all above,
I could devour thee, nor appease my love.

60.

"So sways me love, that had thy lips confessed
To want the golden goat—blest beast, that ne'er [6]
By man was fed or milked, that licks the best
Of mountain moss that clothes Bau-Manière,—[7]
The dappled marvel at thy feet should lie,
Or 'midst the crags a hunter shamed I'd die.

61.

"I love thee, O thou young enchantress, so—
Did'st thou but sign, 'Of such a star I've need;
Nor forest, sea, nor torrent's maddened flow,
Not fire or sword should check or change my speed,
Till from some heav'n-capped peak I'd plucked it down,
And the next sabbath 'twere thy vestal crown.

62.

"But, oh thou more than fair, the more I muse
Thy wondrous self, alas! the more I'm lost;
Once saw I by the fountain of Vaucluse[8]
A fig-tree (a bare rock its boughs embossed),
So poor its life, the lizard would resign
Its niggard shelter for a jasmine bine.

63.

"The neighbour waters to its root each year
Once rise; the plant, with lengthened fast athirst,
With draughts insatiate quaffs the unstinted cheer;
To a year's life again the leaflets burst,
And bless the generous alms. It fits me well,
As jewel set in gold, this parable.

64.

"The figtree on the barren cliff am I;
Thou art the fountain with its living gift:
May Heaven this blessing grant, each year to lie
But once at thy dear feet, and humbly lift
My cheek to sue the sunshine of thy face,
And once with trembling love thine hand embrace."

65.

Mirelle, bewildered, drinks his honied voice;
He, in the blindest ecstacy of love,
Her heart like-blinded with extatic joys
To his strong bosom clasps. Now through the grove,
"Mirelle," an ancient dame's sharp accents peal,
"Why faint thy silkworms for their mid-day meal?"

66.

When, in the covert of some flaky pine,
A troop of sparrows, frolicsome and gay,
In evening sports their merry chirps combine,
There comes a gleaner on his homeward way,
By wanton stone the happy group is strewed,
Each outcast seeks some forest solitude.

67.

Thus horror-startled, devious through the land
The enamoured pair in sad divorcement fled;
She sought the Croft, but first with quivering hand,
Hoisted in haste her basket on her head;
He saw her, fixed as one that dreams by day,
Trip o'er the moor and vanish far away.

NOTES ON CANTO II.

Note 1, stanza 1, line 1.

["Sing, sing, ye silkmaids." Chantez, chantez, magnarolles. Magnarolle is a woman who has the care of the silkworms, from the local name for a silkworm, magnan. I have ventured to invent a word for what I could otherwise express only by the use of several.]

Note 2, stanza 1, line 2.

"While soft your silkworms sleep
To their third life."

Ils s'endorment de leur troisième somme. The silkworm passes about twenty-four days in the larva state, and during this period changes its skin four times. As the time for changing approaches, it becomes benumbed and ceases to feed.

[That the descriptions and allusions to the culture of the silkworm, which occur in this and the following canto, may be more readily understood, I think it best to add the following particulars.

The silkworm is about eight weeks in arriving at maturity. While the eggs or seeds are hatching, paper pierced with holes is placed over them, and through these the worms, on quitting the shell, climb to the mulberry leaves hung over them. They are then moved to hurdles made of reeds, arranged like shelves. After each change of skin, called also *mue*, the appetite increases enormously. The periods of appetite preceding the first changes are called *petites frèzes*, and that before the last, *grande frèze*. The worms produced by an ounce of eggs devour seven pounds of leaves during the first period, and two or three hundred pounds during the last period. At that time they make a noise in eating which resembles the falling of a heavy shower. On the tenth day of the last *somme* or *mue* they cease to eat, and try to climb up to the small twigs, purposely hung over the shelves, in order to spin the cocoon, which they complete in three or four days.

The mulberry which supplies the silkworm with leaves is not the black mulberry cultivated in England, but the white, which was originally introduced from China, the fruit being of no esteem, except for feeding poultry. A single tree will yield five or six and not unfrequently nine or ten quintals of leaves.

In some parts of France, a new species, called the *Philippine* mulberry, has been introduced from Manilla, and is superseding the Chinese.]

Note 3, stanza 16, line 2.

"Warbled our country's magic Peyronelle." Peyronelle or Perronelle is the title of a very ancient song, so ancient that its name only remains, and this has become proverbial. When the weather is fine, and when, for example, the countrywomen are employed in gathering the olives, it is customary to say, "It is weather for singing the Peyronelle"—"The olive-girls must be singing the Peyronelle."

Note 4, stanza 20, line 4.

"The sakir spreads his pinions of snow." "Le sacra," *vultur perconopterus*, one of the largest birds of prey.

Note 5, stanza 22, line 4.

"Thou'dst sup on regardelles, my faith I gage." "Regardelles," imaginary viands.

Note 6, stanza 60, line 2.

"To want the golden goat." La chèvre d'or, the golden goat, is a treasure or talisman, which the people suppose to have been buried by the Saracens, under one of the ancient monuments of Provence. Some assert that it lies under the mausoleum of St. Remy, others in the grotto of Corde, others under the rocks of Baux. "This tradition," says George Sand (la vision de la nuit dans les campagnes), "is universal; there are few ruins, castles or monasteries, few Celtic monuments which do not secrete their treasure. All are guarded by some demon animal." M. Jules Canonge, in a charming collection of southern stories, has attributed a gracious and benevolent character to the apparition of the golden goat, the guardian of the riches concealed in the bosom of the earth.

The tradition of a treasure, which assumes numberless forms, but each having its assigned origin, and being guarded by a strange animal, is universal. It may be found among all nations, and is associated with the most remote memories, without ceasing to have a present existence. It may be traced back to its source, under all its transformations, in the fourth and fifth volumes of the "Monde Païen," lately published by M. d'Anselme. It gives me pleasure to quote here the astonishing works of mythological exegesis of my learned fellowcountryman.

Note 7, stanza 60, line 4.

"Of mountain moss that clothes Baumanière." Baumanière, a pointed rock to the north of the town of les Baux. This locality derives its name from the escarpments which surround it, as in the Provençal language, the word Baux means an escarpment, precipice: Baumaniero, Baus-besso, Baus-mirano, Baus-eonstèmple, are names still borne by different places in the territory of les Baux.

Note 8, stanza 62, line 3.

"Once saw I by the fountain of Vaucluse
A fig-tree."

The noted wild fig-tree, growing in a crevice of the rock above the grotto which contains the fountain of Vaucluse. When the waters attain their greatest height they reach its roots, which may be said to form the water-mark.

CANTO III.

THE GATHERING OF THE COCOONS.

The harvests of Provence—At the Cornel Croft, a merry bevy of young girls detaches from the branches the cocoons of the silkworms—Jeanne Marie, mother of Mirelle—Tavène, the sorceress of Baux—The Evil Eye—The cocoon gatherers, by way of pastime, build *Châteaux en Provençe*—Proud Laura, queen of Pamparigouste—Clemence, queen of Baux—Mont Ventour, the Rhone, the Durance—Adelaide and Violaine—The Court of Love—The loves of Mirelle and Vincent divulged by Norade—Raillery of the young maidens—The sorceress Tavène imposes silence—The hermit of Luberon and the Holy Shepherd—Nora sings Magali.

I.

When harvest hour is blest, and olive groves
O'erflow the earthen jars with ruddy oil—
When husbandman o'er swath and furrow roves,
And contemplates, refreshed with double toil,
The wain that rumbles o'er its rugged road,
And creaks and staggers 'neath the stately load;

2.

When Bacchus, like to brawny wrestler nude
Of bust and limb, exulting at their head,
Cray's hinds leads forth to where her amplitude
Of grapes beneath their bounding feet they tread,
And the blest streams above their must-stained thighs
From every vat in spumy fountains rise;

3.

And when the filmy silkworms on the broom
In gala mount their prisoning net to spin,
And these accomplished artists of the loom,
These creatures of the diaphanic skin,
By myriads swaddle them in cradle gay
As tissue woven of the solar ray;

4.

Then, in the merry hamlets of Provence,
Their gaiety is past its measure gay;
Sparkle and foam the champion wines of France,
The musky Baume, and thymy Fergoulet:[1]
They sing, they feast, and youthful pairs between,
Trace their light circles to the tambourine.

5.

"And I am blessed—yea I; for see around
How my wreaths, wove of reed and heathbell flower,
With amber garlands of cocoons abound:
Ne'er such a harvesting in silken bower
The farm hath quickened, since that day God-sped,
When I, my friends, a tender girl, was wed."

6.

Thus while the silkworms from the twigs they part,
Jeanne Marie, goodman Raymond's honoured spouse,
Mirelle's proud mother, owns her grateful heart,
As friends and neighbours on her joy carouse,
And in the temple sacred to their toil,
The tangled workmen from their haunts uncoil.

7.

So speeds the silken harvest; e'en Mirelle,
Nimble of hand, the dames with twigs supplies
Of holme or rosemary, where their citadel
The worms have woven; for her noble prize,
Intent on toil, the mountain balm have sought,
And skeins of golden palms for prisons wrought.

8.

Then spake Jeanne Marie: "Friends, e'en yesterday,
With pious forecast on the Virgin's shrine,
A choice tithe offering of my fruits there lay—
Each year the reverent custom hath been mine,
For 'tis, i'faith, but of her holy will,
That these small worms exert creative skill."

9.

Then of the farm de l'Hôte spoke Isolind:
"Alas, that I my hopes could reckon so!
When there swooped o'er us the great eastern wind
(Ye all wot well of that long day of woe),
Agape I left the window—careless dame—
Twice ten bleached corpses register my shame."[2]

10.

Tavène, of Baux, to Isolind replied
(She came with helping heart): "Ye, jaunty folk,
Would shove the wisdom of old age aside,
And cramp our senses with your sapient yoke,
Nor own 'tis through affliction's woes and tears,
Our days of strength advise our waning years.

11.

"Ye silly housewives, if your eggs crop out
A healthy hatching, through the town ye fly—
'Come view my wondrous brood, nor longer doubt,
Their beauty seen, my favoured destiny:'
Then sceptic envy, who ne'er lags behind,
Sneers at the lack, or is perversely blind.

12.

"A neighbour cries: 'I triumph in thy pride;
Clear thou wast born beneath a star benign.'
But scarce thou'st turned thee from the flatterer's side,
When on thy hopes she darts the eye malign—
The wind ye say hath curdled up your crop,
As each lies withered like a mildew drop."

13.

"Not I what thou hast said dare contravene,"
Says Isolind; "but on that day, natheless,
My casement open stood." "Thou dost not ween
Of spells from demon eyes of sorceress,"
Tavène rejoins, "that glare and grimly dance?"
Whilst Isolind she scares with look askance.

14.

"Ye fools! ye whet the scalpel to explore
The slaughtered bee, his pulse and seat of sting,
And judge the alembic of his chemic store;
But know ye not a wizard look can wring
From its dark cell the untimely embryo,
And staunch the uddered cow's life-giving flow?

15.

"The owl's spell lures small warblers to their fate;
The serpent's gaze the swans that sunward sweep;
And shall the eye of man not fascinate
Those slender reptiles to the enchanted sleep?
But when enamoured youth's enamoured eye
With fervour glows, rayed less of earth than sky,

16.

"'Gainst their enchantment where's your counter charm,
Young sapient virgins?" From their hands their skeins
Let slip four lasses. "Thou that brewest harm
From June to brown October, call'st the rains,
Adder of whetted sting!" they cry and jeer;
"Canst thou one moment make the lads appear?"

17.

"Nay, nay," the troop of laughing girls protest,
"We want them not; nor surely thou, Mirelle?"
She answers, "'Tis not every day is blest
With harvest mirth—below, I know it well,
Lurks of the oldest wine a curious flask;"
And cellarward she hies, her blush to mask.

18.

"Well, my good friends," quoth Laura, hight the Proud,
"Saw I, though sadly poor, a simple maid—
No son of man to favour having vowed—
Pamparigouste's great king before me laid,[3]
How sweet seven years to bid the monarch kneel,
And watch the anguish none save I could heal!"

19.

Says Clementine, "A different mood is mine;
If chance some king should sigh for love of me,
Where he but young, discreet, of person fine,
Past all his subjects of whate'er degree,
I might with less caprice the honour dare
To deck his palace, and his state to share.

20.

"When he'd arrayed me, as his Empress-queen,
In royal robes majestically bright
With gorgeous tissue wrought in golden sheen,
And on my blazing head my crown alight
With pearls and emeralds set, a queen I'd come
To Baux, and see once more my poor loved home.

21.

"There would I place my stately capital—
Of the old castle, so in ruins drear,
On yonder rock, I'd build each tower and wall,
And at one angle a new turret rear,
Whose marble spire should mingle with the stars;
And if I'd solace seek from queenly jars,

22.

"Its lofty keep I'd gratefully ascend,
Aside my crown and sovereign emblems thrown,
And with my prince, my husband, and my friend,
(And by my halidom with him alone,)
How sweet as o'er the battlement we lean,
To gaze till distance carries off the scene.

23.

"To see around my realm of gay Provence,
Like one vast open-blossomed orange bower,
Its hills and meadows scarped or sloped to fence
The topaz sea with forest rock or flower,
Where fleets of galleys at each sheet inhale
The breeze, and round It's castle proudly sail. 4

24.

"And Ventour, workshop of the thunderbolt— 5
Ventour, the hoary chief of mountain clan
Bowed ever 'neath him, while to the starry vault
His white head mounts, as patriarch husbandman,
Who, while they browse beneath his pines and oaks,
Leans on his staff and meditates his flocks.

25.

"And Rhone, whose towns deploy in marble ranks,
And singing, laughing, quaff his crystal tide,
While long and broad their lips infringe his banks—
Rhone that o'erswells each river-god in pride,
Yet bends round Avignon in reverence mute,
On her high rock our Lady to salute. 6

26.

"And fleet Durance, like goat of bounding flight,
That in its course the rocking willow gnaws,
Rugged in gait, as wild of appetite;
Or giddy maiden who her pitcher draws
From the deep well, and spills it as she toys
With the rough lads her wantonness decoys."

27.

While yet she weaves her fiction, Clementine,
This gentle queen of Provence, from her seat
Uprises, and unlades with royal mien
Her apron in the basket at her feet.
Now dark tressed Adelaide, and Violaine
Her twin (their parents farmed a vast domain)—

28.

Dark Adelaide and Violaine her twin
Oft at the Cornel Croft were cherished guests;
But love, the enchanter, who delights to spin
Some tyrant toil round soft and tender breasts,
Had to their twinship this foul outrage done,
That their two hearts in loving were but one.

29.

Then Adelaide with head erect began:
"Young maids, since thus we hold our festival,
Accord me in my turn my queenly span;
Grant me Marseilles, its fleet and arsenal;
Gay Ciotat, and almond groved Salot,
With Beaucaire's meads as appanage bestow;

30.

"'Ye gentle damsels, and ye simple maids
Of Arles, of Baux, of Barbentane,' I'd say,
'Fly to my court like birds with feathered aids;'
I'd choose the seven most beauteous, who should weigh
Love in the balance, were he true or rake;
Come all ye seven, come and gay counsel take.

31.

"What thought so wearisome as when a pair
Of hearts, harmonious from their lovetide spring,
Through half their lives must sorrow and despair—
I, the Queen Adelaide, this cordial bring,
If e'er a couple from their bliss be pent
By cause unjust or cursed impediment,

32.

"My seven choice virgins, in their judgment hall,
For them shall laws of clemency indite.
Shall maid for gold or gems her honour pall,
Or to his maiden's heart youth do despite,
Dread penal statutes shall they forge for these,
And love's most injured majesty appease.

33.

"Then for one damsel if two swains should sigh,
Or (direr fate) should two pale maidens weep
For one sweet youth, my council should apply
Their subtle skill, and probe with questions deep;
Then, who'd best loved and wooed condignly proved,
Rule who should be most equitably loved.

34.

"And with my lovely Chancery I'd combine
Seven poets, who should tunefully agree
In lyric strains to exalt the noble Nine—
Let them inscribe love's laws on bark of tree,
Or wildvine leaf in strains with sweets alive,
As mellowest honey oozing from the hive.

35.

" Sure thus of yore did Fanette of Gantelme [7]
Speak from her forum canopy of pine,
While her starred brow illumed her love-ruled realm,
Which gentler Alps and Romanin confine;
Nor less the Countess, sappho-like, of Die, [8]
Fair arbitress of love and poesie."

36.

While thus they sport, Mirelle, with flask in hand,
And fair as Easter morn, re-enters gay,
And friendly challenges the busy band:
" Good wine will mellow work to tone of play;
Come, come, my friends, 'tis now our resting tide,
Hold forth your cups, and lay your tasks aside."

37.

And from the flask, fast set in wicker mould,
Into each cup in measured sequence flows
The warming juice, its form a thread of gold.
" To me its virtue this elixir owes,
Which at my window forty days ferments;
The purging sun draws out all tart contents;

38.

"Three mountain herbs of dulcèt charm I add,
And from the musk, that's o'er them poured, distil
A scent that balms and makes the bosom glad."
One cries, "Mirelle, now listen to our will:
Each tells, if Fortune wealth and crown should place
Before her feet, how best she'd use her grace;

39.

"And thou, Mirelle, what think'st of our device?"
"I'faith, I know not what ye'd have me say;
Blessed in my parents, sure my goods suffice;
What lure should draw me from my home of Cray?"
"Ah!" cried a lass, "truth will itself unfold,
And what thou sigh'st for is nor gem nor gold;

40.

"But one bright morning (how my memory wakes)
Thou'lt pardon my simplicity, Mirelle,
'Twas Tuesday—I had gleaned my tale of stakes,
And faggot-laden passed the White-Cross well;
And spied thee 'midst the leafage, somewhat bare,
With one discoursing, young and debonnair."

41.

"Who, who?" the many voices chime—"and whence?"
Norade replies—"I had no open view
Through the slant thicket; yet unless my sense
Was fooled to change the seeming for the true,
Methought 'twas Vincent thus engaged my sight,
The lad from Valabrègue, the basket wight."

42.

"Heigho! the cunning one," in chorus glee
The girls shout out, and laughter rings around;
"Some dainty corbel ware she asked to see,
And charmed his fancy with a lover found;
Our Queen of Beauty, and our pattern bright,
Vincent the Barefoot to proclaim her knight!"

43.

Thus banter they—meanwhile, a look aslant
On each with frown indignant casts Tavène:
"A curse, ye silly mockers, on your cant,"
She loud exclaims; "the Roumecque suck your brain,9
Till 'neath the brute ye're mute and senseless found!
If God passed by and shed Elysium round,

44.

"Ye'd jeer, ye brainless fools. 'Tis sage, forsooth,
Of Vincent thus to make your laughing stock;
To judge from outward garb the inward truth—
List to the oracle, then haste to mock;
God in my days before His Temple gate
A wonder wrought (I plight what I relate);

45.

"There was a shepherd, whose lone days had run
In state half savage, as his flock he pent
On the rough slopes of icy Luberon,[10]
Till, as his iron form was graveward bent,
He sought, as duty prompts when rue begins,
St. Eucher's hermit to confess his sins.

46.

"At Valmasque, in the Witches' Vale recluse,[11]
Since he in Easter days took childish part,
Of church or shrine he'd lost to know the use;
All love of prayer had shrivelled in his heart,
When from his hut he sought the mountain cell,
And prostrate 'fore the holy father fell.

47.

" 'What sin repented needs my healing shrift?'
The priest demands. The old man meek replies,
'Alas! the veil from sinful soul I'd lift;
Once 'mid my flock a friendly wagtail flies,
A bird that shepherds love, that loves them too,
The guest at random with a flint I slew.'

48.

" If he dissemble not, this man must be
A lackwit, mused the aged anchorite;
And the confession closing— 'Doff,' saith he,
As on his face he gazed in search of light,
'Thy cloak, and hang it, brother, on yon rod,
While I pronounce the pardon-grace of God.'

49.

" The rod which thus, his sense to gauge, the monk
Pointed the shepherd, was the solar ray,
That on the chapel-floor obliquely sunk;
He takes in faith the mantle to obey,
Casts it as if 'twould rest on oaken beam;
And lo! it hangs on high across the gleam!

50.

"'Choice man of God,' the admiring priest adjures;
And, weeping, throws him at the herdsman's feet;
'I to shrive thee, and class with evil-doers—
Be my repentant tears a penance meet;
On me one moment let thy blessed hand lie—
God's saint elect art thou—His sinner, I.'"

51.

Thus ceased Tavène, as had all mirth meanwhile.
"'Tis proof," at length enunciates Laurette—
"'Tis proof how mad the error to revile
A humble garb (I fear I'm sinner yet);
Good beasts may dwell in any hide or shape—
But to our tale again—like sunny grape,

52.

"To crimson flushed our pretty mistress' cheek
At Vincent's tuneful name—I noted well;
And why so secret, pretty one? come speak—
Tell us how your leaf-gathering befell;
Each helping each, time leaves himself behind,
Or metes his paces to the lover's mind."

53.

"To work and loose your cocoons, cease your quips!"
Commands Mirelle; "sure time enough ye've gibed;
Unholy curse ye'd wring from holy lips;
But to confound you, ere I would be bribed
To earthly nuptials, Heaven's bride-wreath I'd wear,
And shrine my blossom days in God and prayer!"

54.

A chirp incredulous the maidens trill
In unison of lightsome raillery;
"Why she'd the loveless mockery fulfil
Of the proud maid of Arles, young Magali,
Who'd pray, all amorous ecstacies to shun,
St. Blaise for living burial of a nun.

55.

"But, Nora, thou who canst caress the ear
With spells of song that on thy willing wait,
Sing her of Magali, her coy career,
And thousand wiles she imaged 'gainst her fate;
Would be a leaf, a sunbeam, or a dove,
And yet, at last, in course was trapped by love."

56.

"O Magali, Love's model maid," began [12]
Compliant Nora—brisker beat each heart,
While their skeins nimbler through their fingers ran;
As at one cricket's chirp a thousand start,
Thus with the prelude each fair bosom rhymes,
Each silver voice bells out the choral chimes.

I.

O Magali, love's model maid,
Accept my modest serenade,[13]
List from thy window, not unseen,
My violins and tambourine.

II.

With robe of stars the sky's still dressed;
The winds have rocked themselves to rest
But when thou lift'st thy window veil,
At sight of thee, the stars will pale.

III.

Thy serenade's no more to me
Than is the murmuring of the tree,
But to the sea-kissed rock I'll steal,
To hide beneath like silver eel.

IV.

O Magali, if thou become
The denizen of watery home,
I'll be a fisher night and day,
Until I claim thee for my prey.

V.

If thou art fisherman, and cast
Thy net to search the waters vast,
Meanwhile I'll turn to bird, and hide
In distant lands unknown and wide.

VI.

O Magali, if thou should'st change
To bird that beats the airy range,
I'll learn and ply each art and lure
That my sweet quarry can secure.

VII.

While for young partridge thou shalt beat,
Or spread thy toils the lark to cheat,
I'll turn to flowering herb, and cower
Where meadows broad shall form my bower

VIII.

O Magali, if thou put on
The daisy's pied caparison,
A limpid streamlet shalt thou see
Curl round thy feet to water thee.

IX.

If thou the water's nature take,
Myself a flying cloud I'll make,
And scud away, beyond thy ken,
To lands of other climes and men.

X.

O Magali, if thou would'st fly
To distant land of other sky,
I'll be a chariot of the air,
And carry thee triumphant there.

XI.

Art thou the gale that flings the spray,
I'll take my flight another way,
And be the all-pervading sun,
That thaws the ice it shines upon.

XII.

O Magali, if thou absorb
The essence of the solar orb,
The salamander will I be,
And drink all day full draughts of thee.

XIII.

If thou the form of lizard wear,
That in the thicket makes its lair,
I'll be the far-off queen of night,
While witches dance beneath my light.

XIV.

O Magali, if thou should'st be
The moon in her full majesty,
I'll be the soft and silken haze,
And weave a prison round thy rays.

XV.

If thou with mist would wrap me round,
Not in thy net will I be found;
I'll be the virgin rose, and blush
To hear my praises from the thrush.

XVI.

O Magali, if thou assume
The mantle of the rose's bloom,
I'll be the joyous butterfly,
And kiss and sip thee till I die.

XVII.

Nay rash pursuer, though thou run
With wingèd speed, thou'lt be outdone;
For in the forest thick and dark,
The oak shall lock me in his bark.

XVIII.

O Magali, adoptest thou
The oak that climbs the mountain brow;
I'll turn to living ivy bine,
Round trunk and branch my arms to twine.

XIX.

And when thou think'st to clasp me round,
A withered trunk wilt thou have found;
A pensive nun I'll vow my days
To the blessed cloister of St. Blaise.

xx.

O Magali, if thou espouse
The cloister life with holy vows,
Then I'll put on the priestly dress,
And hear thee all my wrongs confess.

57.

Here start the listeners at the dread intent,
The golden cones fall rustling from their hands—
"Say, Nora, say if Magali were bent
In heart, poor child, to pine in convent bands,
Who e'en now hath resolved her with a wish,
Oak, flower, sun, moon, cloud, herb, moth, bird and fish."

58.

"But patience while her chronicle I close;
My thread was cut, methinks, where she professed
Her virgin heart in cloister should repose,
And heard her wooer unabashed protest,
Her heart as shriving father he would hear;
But list the subtle stratagems of fear."

XXI.

If thou within the convent gate
Shalt think to share my holy state,
Thou'lt see the nuns around me crowd,
And, weeping, fold me in my shroud.

XXII.

O Magali, if thou defy
My constant search and early die,
I'll be the earth, and in my breast
Will clasp thee in thine ever rest.

XXIII.

At length my faith begins to dawn,
Now speak'st thou well, and not in scorn;
My crystal ring, sweet youth, then take,
And wear it for the giver's sake.

XXIV.

O Magali, I'll live for thee,
Since thou dost give such life to me;
But since thou hast thy charms unveiled,
Oh! see the stars how they have paled.

59.

The strain was o'er, and lulled was every tongue;
So rare the minstrel, and the song so sweet;
Each listener bending o'er the enchantment hung:
Thus flocks of margin rushes stoop to meet
The wizard wooings of the stream below,
And supple bend accordant to its flow.

60.

"But see, without invites the tempered ray,"
Nora resumes—"The mowers in the stew
Plunge their bright scythes, then wipe the grit away;
Our arbour board, Mirelle, with apples strew,
St. John's sweet firstlings, and thy savoury cheese,
And thus we'll banquet 'neath the Cornel trees."

NOTES ON CANTO III.

Note 1, stanza 4, line 4.

"The musky Baume and thymy Fergoulet." "Le bon muscat de Baume." Baume is a village, in the department of Vaucluse, which produces a muscadine wine held in some esteem.

Le ferigoulet, [which I have contracted into fergoulet,] is an excellent wine grown on the slopes of the hills of Graveson (Bouches du Rhone). Ferigoulo signifies in Provençal, thyme, and the wine, as its name imports, suggests an agreeable perfume of that herb.

Note 2, stanza 9, line 6.

"Twice ten bleached corpses." "Blanchis" is a term applied to silkworms attacked by the terrible disease called muscardine, which arises from a kind of mouldiness, which gives them the appearance of being plastered.

Note 3, stanza 18, line 4.

"Pamparigouste's great king before me laid." In the Provençal, Pamparigousto is used as indicating an imaginary country, like the French Cocagne.

Note 4, stanza 23, line 6.

["Round If's castle proudly sail." If, the nearest to Marseilles, and the smallest of a group of small islands in the Gulf of Lyons, crowned by a castle, once used as a state prison, in which Mirabeau was shut up. On the opposite side of the harbour is the fort of Notre Dame de la Garde, described by Bachaumont in the following lines:—

Gouvernement, commode et beau,
A qui suffit pour toute garde,
Un Suisse avec sa hallebarde,
Peint à la porte du château.]

Note 5, stanza 24, line 1.

"Ventour, workshop of the thunderbolt." Le Ventour is a lofty mountain 30 miles N.E. of Avignon, rising suddenly 6,400 feet above the sea level, standing quite isolated, and very steep. It is visible at a distance of 40 leagues, and is crowned with snow during six months of the year. Geographers are in error in writing the name Ventoux instead of Ventour. The neighbouring inhabitants are unanimous in pronouncing it Ventour. One of its peaks bears the name of Ventouret, and a northern wind has received the name of La Ventoureso, because it blows from this quarter.

Note 6, stanza 25, line 6.

["On her high rock our Lady to salute." Notre Dame des Doms (de Dominis) the Cathedral of Avignon, which stands above the town, being reached by a long flight of steps.]

Note 7, stanza 35, line 1.

"Fanette of Gantelme." Estéfanette, by abbreviation Fanette, of the noble family of Gantelme, presided about 1340 at the Court of Love of Romanin. These courts of love were poetical assizes, at which the most noble, beautiful and learned ladies in Gay-Saber judged questions of gallantry, and love disputes, and awarded prizes for Provençal poetry. The beautiful and celebrated Laura was niece of Fanette of Gantelme, and bore her part in the graceful areopagus. Not far from St. Remy, at the foot of the northern slope of the Alpines, may still be seen the ruins of the ancient Castle of Romanin.

Note 8, stanza 35, line 5.

"The Countess, Sappho-like, of Die." The Countess of Die, a celebrated trouveresse of the middle portion of the Twelfth Century. Her songs, which are still extant, contain raptures sometimes more passionate and voluptuous than those of Sappho.

Note 9, stanza 43, line 4.

"The Roumecque suck your brain." The roumecque is a species of southern vampire. A description of it in Provençal poetry is given by the Marquis de Lafare-Alais.

Note 10, stanza 45, line 3.

"On the rough slopes of icy Luberon." Luberon, a chain of mountains in the department of Vaucluse.

Note 11, stanza 46, line 1.

"At Valmasque, in the witches' vale recluse." Valmasque (vau-masco, valley of the witches), a valley of the Luberon chain, formerly inhabited by the Vaudois.

Note 12, stanza 56, line 1.

["O Magali! Love's model maid." The popular air to which the song of Magali has been composed, is given in the original of Mireille, but I have not thought it likely to be of such interest in England, as to be induced to insert it.]

Note 13, Nora's song, stanza 1.

["And deign to list my serenade." The use of the word serenade requires some apology, as it will appear in this instance, that the song is supposed to be sung immediately before sunrise. The French word "aubade" employed in the text expresses this, but as our language affords no equivalent, I have used the word serenade, qualifying it with this explanation.]

CANTO IV.

THE SUITORS.

The violet season—The fishermen of Martigue—Three suitors seek the hand of Mirelle: Alari, breeder of sheep; Véran, of horses; Elzéar, of cattle—Alari, whose riches were his sheep—The shearing—The change of pasture ground: description of a large flock coming down from the Alps—Interview of Alari with Mirelle—The mausoleum of St. Rémy—Offering by the shepherd of his cup of carved wood—Alari is rejected—Véran the breeder of horses—The white mares of Camargue—Véran demands Mirelle of Master Raymond—Joy and welcome reception of the old man—Refusal of Mirelle—Elzéar the bull tamer—The wild black bulls—The Ferrade—Elzéar and Mirelle at the fountain—Rejection of Elzéar.

I.

Soon as the dayspring of the violet
Drifts o'er the freshened meads its air-borne sweets,
No lack of paired explorers to beset
With lover's quest its new enleafed retreats—
When the sea's winter of turmoil is o'er
And gently heaves her bosom to the shore,

2.

No lack of prams and shallops that Martigue [1]
A goodly fleet with net and wings endows,
Against the finny nations to intrigue,
And gem the slumbering depth with thousand prows—
And when, harmonious with the bloomtide hour,
Young maidens swarm, as bees in myrtle bower;

3.

When lass or lady beauty's crown affects,
No lack of pursuivants in cray or hall;
By right the Cornel Croft its train expects;
Three ardent suitors at its portal fall—
One husbandman of horses, one of kine,
One of the woolly herd, a wealthy trine.

4.

First Alari the shepherd came: 'tis said
A thousand browsing fleeces he could count,
That by Entressen's lake were winter-fed [2]
In pastures salt; but when the wheat-ears mount,
To the great Alps' fresh slopes he'd pick their way,
Obedient to the scented voice of May.

5.

'Tis said, that tow'rds St. Mark's (I wot it true)
Three days nine shearers in his homestead shore,
Men famed afield, nor count I with his crew
Him who the ponderous fleeces storeward bore,
Nor the brisk shepherd lad, who day-long ran
To dress these shearers' ever-thirsty can.

6.

But when at length the heat is tired, and snow
Is swept by whirlwinds from the loftiest peaks,
O'er mountain passes 'twas a gorgeous show
As the rich flock, in files of woollen streaks,
From Dauphiny's high Alps cascading dropped
To Cray's vast plains with winter forage cropped. 3

7.

Ah! 'twas a comely sight this multitude,
As from the stony defiles they deployed;
In the broad van the firstling lambs you viewed,
That gambolled 'neath the lamb-herd's eye and toyed;
Next marched the asses with their warning peals,
Their wives and offspring tangled at their heels;

8.

Their guardian next, his rustic seat astride,
The groom and tutor of the long-eared race;
Then basket bearers, who the fare supplied,
And moveables that summer wants embrace;
The skin yet bleeding of the sheep fresh flayed,
And foot-sore lambs that bleated for the aid.

9.

Five goats, the captain of a phalanx each,
With horns back raking solemn march abreast
With threatening front—you hear their metal speech
As each darts jealous glances on the rest:
Behind the sires the mothers staid in ranks,
And the white kidlings pell-mell with their pranks.

10.

This cormorant and ever-erring troop
Their proper herd should rule—the woolly lords,
The rams with snuffing muzzles form a group,
Whose aspect with their stately step accords,
Pre-eminent with glorious frontal gear
Of horns thrice circling round the fine-spun ear.

11.

Then (noble mark of patriarch renown)
Their sides and backs with honoured tufts are decked,
The spared adornments of their native down;
The shepherd general, calm and circumspect,
In seemly cloak arrayed, maintains the van,
And the main body owns the illustrious man.

12.

Here for the front the matron ewes contend,
And dusty mists with scambling feet excite;
And to their vanward lambs responsive send
Some note of comfort; every neck is bright
With knotted ribands—as they stalk before,
The goats and lagging sheep they powder o'er.

13.

The shepherd vassals, who from space to space
Halloo the dogs; and last, the countless mass,
Pitch-stained their flanks—the adults and those their race
Who twice renew—and then the full-mouthed class,
Those lambless made, and others twins that yean,
Their swelling burdens well-nigh brush the green.

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14.

A ragged squadron next the rear-guard close,
Amid the barren ewes the ancient rams,
Who in love's wars have blenched to younger foes,
The broken mouthed and lamed in hocks and hams,
These foundered wrecks each teemful female scorns
For loss of all—their honour and their horns.

15.

And all this wealth of sheep and goats that swarmed,
Far o'er the land did Alari possess,
The old, the young, the comely and deformed;
Now as successive hundreds past him press,
His eyes delighted rich refreshment quaff;
He for a sceptre waves a maple staff.

16.

And with his monstrous dogs of hide of snow,
That track him through the pastures, all encased
His limbs in home-wrought hosen, calm his brow,
With sage content like ruddy David graced,
He seems, as when the royal youth would bring
His flocks at eve to drink the ancestral spring.

17.

"But lo," revolves the shepherd, "lo, Mirelle,
Who flits and flowers before the Cornel Croft;
Oh! Heaven, sure once hath fame reported well,
That not on plain below, or hill aloft,
In truth or fancy, can her peer be traced
For feature, grace, or form, from brow to waist."

18.

For but to see her Alari was lured
To leave his wandering riches far away;
And now before her standing, forth he poured
His words entranced—"Sweet maiden, canst thou say,
If o'er yon hills my haste a path may find;
Else must I be to weary chase resigned."

19.

"Take yonder right-hand way, thou see'st it there,"
Answered the maid well versed; "thou then wilt tread
The desert of Peyremale; then onward bear
The tortuous vale along, till o'er thine head
An arch peer out—a tomb beneath, whereon
Two chiefs of olden time stand forth in stone,

20.

"'The Ancients,' it is styled." "Unnumbered thanks
Be thine," replied the youth. "Ere morning clear,
A thousand sheep should climb the mountain flanks,
That bear my brand, from Cray: their pioneer,
Must I prevenient trace for them their way,
Their road lay down, and food and fold purvey.

21.

"All goodly animals; and when I wed,
My shepherdess shall list the nightingale
From wake to dawn; and if my thrift be sped,
That thou wilt bear my bridal knot, Mirelle,
Nor gold nor gems my orators shall be,
But a new boxen vase I've carved for thee."

22.

Whereon from 'neath his mantle's folds he brought,
With care and heed for holy relics fit,
A sculptured cup in bole of box-tree wrought;
For in his leisure hours he loved to sit
On the first stone, and pastime make of art;
His simple knife would life to stocks impart.

23.

Thus would his fancy-fertile hand design
Clappers his fielded hosts by night to call,
And on the sheep-bell collars he'd entwine
(As on their tongues) fresh shapes fantastical,
With stroke and counter-stroke, the skimming bird,
The air-rocked flower, or aught his will preferred.

24.

And then this vase, which now his homage breathed,
You'd say, i'faith, no shepherd tool had known;
Its bowl's soft symmetry a flower enwreathed,
A cistus richly leaved and fully blown;
Two goats for handles served, with busy tongue
The dainty blooms they browsed that o'er them hung.

25.

Below, three maidens cunningly were knifed;
Near whom, beneath a bush, a shepherd slept;
The frolic damsels, seemingly enlifed,
On stealthy tip-toe to the slumberer crept;
Softly some grapes from out a basket took,
And o'er his opening mouth a cluster shook.

26.

Round the youth's lips a smile of waking played;
O'er one nymph's cheek some soft emotion passed;
The coloured root the counterfeit betrayed,
Else with the life itself each form were classed;
Still to the wood its native fragrance clung,
No lip had yet upon its border hung.

27.

"I'truth thine offering, shepherd, tempts the sight,"
Said Mirelle, as its beauty she surveyed;
"But my well loved," she added, in her flight,
"A better, shepherd, of his heart hath made:
Mine eyes do homage to the fire of his,
And pains delicious torture me with bliss."

28.

Thus like a sprite the damsel passed away,
And the flock-master, Alari, rehid
His vase beneath his garment, as the day
Into the calm of lulling twilight slid,
Sad that for other, not himself, should beat
The heart of one so exquisitely sweet.

29.

Next saw the Croft, affecting love's reward,
Véran, who noblest coursers bred and trained,
Véran, of Sambuc, where impaints the sward 5
The star-rayed cabridelle; white-skinned and maned 6
A hundred steeds he counts, the rank marsh rush
With their elastic hoofs they mow or crush.

30.

A hundred milk-white steeds that fanned the air
With wealth of mane, like water-torch in form,
A floating banner, steel ne'er bent a hair;
And when with life aburst, and frolic warm,
Apart, and free, they scud, it streams behind
Like scarf of fairy quivering in the wind.

31.

Shame to thy kind, O man, that thou couldst ne'er
The mares of Camargue to thy lordship press! 7
What though their flank with tyrant spur thou tear,
Or handle them with counterfeit caress!
Yet some I've seen by treachery o'ercome,
For exile quit their loved salacious home,

32.

Till their proud lords to confidence beguiled,
Rued stretched on earth the conquest ill-begun;
Then twice ten leagues of marshland free and wild
Their hoofs devour, till Vaccarés' rewon; [8]
Their native life the ten years' slaves inhale,
And strain their nostrils to the briny gale.

33.

Wild Ocean's children well they claim to be,
Whilom self-franchised from old Neptune's car,
Still flecked with foam their sides—when threateningly
Augurs the ruffled sea, ships near and far
Their cables burst, 'tis then the palmy day
Of Camargue's stallion, neighing to the spray.

34.

His flossy tail the flashing whip will mock;
He grinds the soil beneath his angry heel,
As though great Neptune, from his throne of rock,
Had pierced him with the sacred trident's steel,
While flood and tempest on th'affrighted shores,
Commingling sea and sky, his fury pours.

35.

Such led Véran to pasture; there they tell
That on his merchant wanderings through Cray,
His steps, with silent purpose, tracked Mirelle;
For in Camargue, and thenceward, far away
To Rhone's huge mouths, her beauty tuned each tongue,
And time will echo long what all have sung.

36.

Proudly he came, in Arlian burnoose
Long and fair-coloured o'er his shoulder thrown,
Cloakwise, and round his waist in countless hues
As wizard's back, was clasped a starry zone;
His hat of burnished cloth the southern ray
Flashed brightly back, as he pursued his way.

37.

Now 'fore old Raymond as he stood unknown,
Good day he gave him, and good luck thereto,
"I'm of Camargue," he said, "begirt by Rhone,
The Prefect Peter's grandson—well ye knew
My grandsire, Prefect Peter, and his train
Of coursers—twenty years they trod thy grain.

38.

"Thou may'st remember how the worthy man
Seven rodes of horses pastured in our meads,
Quick worked the leaven, and we soon outran
The nimble sickles with our growth of steeds:
Seven rodes we own and seven strong pairs to boot."
The old man answers with a deep salute:

39.

"Long may'st thou see them multiply and long
To pasture lead—'tis true, right well I knew
Thy good grandfather, and the bands were strong
That clamped our hands; but wintry days undo
The summer's growth; then each must calmly dwell
'Neath his own lamp, our friends and we—farewell."

40.

"But," urged the youth, "I've purpose for thine ear,
Thou wott'st not of. Oft as your neighbours bring
Their wains to Sambuc with the circling year,
And litter seek to aid the toils of spring,
Their towering loads our hands astir to bind,
Cray's gentle maids engage each tongue and mind.

41.

"Such praises then of thy sweet daughter fall
On my believing and enraptured ears,
That, should my suit find favour, soon thou'lt call
Véran thy son." "Oh, blest my evetide years;
Thy grandsire's friend what better hope could glee,
Than his young bloom, that speaks the ancient tree."

42.

And as thanksgivers stretch their hands on high,
He prayed with his to God the Giver, bent:
"Grant but my late my only joy descry
In thee the blossom of her heart's content;
Then in prevision of her dower I'll pray
The saints' eternal rest forecast thy day."

43.

Straight at his beck his child was at his side,
And quick he told his purpose; trembling, pale,
Her unregarding eyes downcast, she cried,
"O, father, what do holy ties avail?
Or where thy saint-like wisdom, that thy child
Should be (no woman) from thy home exiled?

44.

"Oft hast thou warned, 'Who woo, should banish speed,'
And seemly march with step deliberate;
That deep acquaintance matrimony feed;
What wisdom lurks in deeds precipitate?"
And through the cloud which erst her smiles restrained
Flashed some sweet thought. The morn, when it hath rained

45.

The flowers thus glisten with refreshened hue,
Viewed through the seeming desolating shower.
The mother favours all her words—"Adieu,
Good Master Raymond"—he who ruled the flower
Of courser hordes with smile exclaims, "I cease—
The sting of gnat well knows a Camarguese."

46.

But ere the summer waned, the Croft beheld
Elzéar come, the famous maid to view;
The drover from Le Sauvage, he who quelled [11]
Its wild back steers—broad-cast they terror threw;
Were the earth summer-parched or winter hoar,
Or sheeted floods disguised her beauteous floor,

47.

There lived he lonely with the kine he fed;
From spring to fall, from fall to rising spring,
He pastured them, and 'mid them born and bred,
He'd ta'en their structure lowering, menacing,
Their savage eye, and cruelty of soul;
And when, half stripped, he grasped his clubby pole,

48.

How oft the monster from its mother's fount
The feeding calf would sudden clutch and rend;
How high his rage would make the splinters mount
From sheaves of stakes that o'er the dam descend;
Till raving, backward looking she would flee
To the young pines and hide her agony.

49.

But of the herds of heifers and young kine
He by the horns had grappled and o'erthrown
At the rough ferrade, a deep wound is sign [12]
Betwixt his eyebrows, where it cleft the bone,
As bolt the cloud—the dark smeared brambles yet
And salicornes record the purple jet.

50.

One day whereon was held the great Ferrade,
From Saintes, Fareman, Aigues-Mortes, and Alberon,
To drive the cattle to the branding-yard,
Five score choice horsemen o'er the moors had gone;
Round the wide scene a monstrous circle wrought
A frantic rabble raving for the sport.

51.

Shocked from their slumber in the salty plain,
Harassed with flying spearman's triple goad,
Reckless with roar of tempest o'er the main,
Strewing with herb and shrub their pasture road,
Bulls, jostling cows within the lists were pressed;
Three hundred hides the brandsman's thews to test.

52.

Dumb with amazement stood the shaggy horde;
Nor long, for, in their side the cruel sting
Like spur in courser's flank, thrice round they roared
The sylvan theatre's exulting ring;
So 'fore the hound the bounding marten flies,
So leads the hawk the eagle through the skies.

53.

Now ('gainst all law and custom to relate)
Slips down Elzéar from his panting mare;
The herds stand huddled at the circus gate,
When five young bulls (their eyes with frenzy glare)
With rush resistless the arena gain,
And skyward toss their heads in proud disdain.

54.

Forth starts Elzéar rapid as the wind;
And as the wind the scudding clouds pursues,
So follows he afoot—and now behind,
And now in front his lance their hides and thews
Incessant goads—now 'fore their horns he bounds,
While with his giant hand each flank resounds.

55.

The mob with hands and loud huzzas applauds;
Elzéar, mantled in Olympian dust,
With coiling arms one ebon monster cords;
Fast to the ground are head and muzzle thrust;
His horns to free in vain his strength's required,
He snuffs the smoking gore he's just expired.

56.

Vain all his rage, his twists and bounds are vain;
With sudden sleight the stalwart herdsman lifts,
And on his shoulder clamps his head and mane;
Then to his other side as lever shifts
And strains the brawny bulk like rampart strong,
While both roll o'er and thus the strife prolong.

57.

The tamarisks quiver, as mad cries resound,
"Bravo, Elzéar, bravo"—whilst the bull
Five lads broad shouldered flatten on the ground,
He with his mark, to fill his triumph full,
The seething iron snatches—with one swoop
The brand rests smoking on the shaggy croup.

58.

Now on white palfreys rushes forth a band
Of Arles' sweet maids, empurpled with their speed,
Beating each breast, they proffer to his hand,
Sparkling with wine, a horn of some vast breed;
But, lo, the whirlwind quick the beasts renew—
The fiery horsemen in a cloud pursue.

59.

None save the bulls Elzéar deigns o'erthrow:
Four wait him yet, as one the scythe who flings
More courage grasps, the more remains to mow,
So in the ardour of these combatings,
Fresh deeds to do fresh might thereto amass;
Thus the four brutes lie hockled on the grass,

60.

The last a steer, white-spotted, grandly horned.
"Enough, enough, Elzéar," friendly shout
His old compeers, to see their wisdom scorned;
His three-pronged spear, poised on his hip, where spout
Great jets of sweat his brawny bosom bare,
He casts him furious 'gainst the snow-flaked steer.

61.

Ha! how the muzzle full he strikes—the lance
In faggots flies—the wound's sharp agony
The bull makes demon-mad; and see advance
The foe—his horns he grasps—away they flee
Together locked, and plough or pare the ground;
The herdsmen of Aïgues-Mortes and Arles around,

62.

Ahorse, all bending o'er their spear's long stake,
Watch the great battle—each for conquest toils;
The man contends the roaring beast to break,
The brute his human breaker trails and foils;
His swollen tongue with foam beslabbered drips,
And as he rushes licks his gory lips.

63.

God's mercy! now the beast prevails; the man,
Like hay that's tossed, before the onset reels;
"The death, the death," but while the death they plan,
With his mad horns, the bull his foeman steels,
His head ferocious hurls him through the wind
Six cubits high, and maimed he rolls behind.

64.

The tamarisks quiver, while the winds resound
With groans of terror, as they see afar
The man fall faceward and from earth rebound:
'Twas then disgraced his cheek that yawning scar:
Now on his mare, his pike his constant arm,
To see Mirelle he sought the Cornel Farm.

65.

Alone that morn, her labours at the spring
The damsel sped—her sleeves were upward coil'd,
And looped her kirtle, as with smoothing ling
To cleanse her cheese-drains merrily she toiled:
Ye saints who watched her! oh! the sight was sweet,
As at the fount she cooled her shell-like feet.

66.

"Good morning, pretty one," hailed Elzéar,
"I see your cullenders you rinse to-day,
And with your leave, I'll let my good grey mare
At your bright spring her morning's thirst allay;"
"Ah, do," she answered, "and within the trough,
She'll find whereof to drink, and find enough."

67.

"My beauty," adds the savage, "wouldst thou dwell
At Silveréal, where we hear the sea, [14]
As wife or pilgrim, sure the change were well;
Small work is there—there range in pastures free
The wild black cows—no milking there is done;
And woman's life is one of ease and sun."

68.

"Young man, in that ox land wherein's your pride,
'Tis said the maidens die of idleness."
"Nay, beauty, not of that which two divide."
"Young man, the bitter water who would bless
That wanders there, whose cheek the scorching ray?"
"But, beauty, 'midst the pines you'll baulk the day."

69.

"Young man, 'tis said, that garlands of green snakes
Your pines festoon." "Beauty, the crane we own,
And tall flamingo; o'er their crimson necks
Their crests erect, they hunt them 'long the Rhone."
"Your pines, young man, though scarce my words may please,
Are far too distant from my Cornel trees."

70.

"Beauty, the proverb says, that priests and maids
Know not what country they shall once embrace,
Eating its daily bread." "An he persuades,
He whom I love, to quit my nesting-place
And eat with him, young man, no more I seek."
"Beauty, give me your love, since thus you speak."

71.

"Young man, I'll give it you," replied Mirelle,
"But not before these river lilies blush
With beaded grapes, nor ere your trident swell
With blooms aburst, or ere yon hills shall gush
As molten wax, and join the lowly plain,
And he who'd go to Baux must cross the main."

NOTES ON CANTO IV.

Note 1, stanza 2, line 1.

"No lack of prams and shallops that Martique." Martique—see note 12, song, stanza 25.

Note 2, stanza 4, line 3.

"That by Entressen's lake were winter-fed." Entressen is a lake in La Crau.

Note 3, stanza 6, line 6.

["To Cray's vast plains with winter forage cropped." M. Millin, after describing the flinty nature of the soil of La Crau, and the plants and herbage which the sheep find under the stones, says that even in the time of Pliny, immense flocks were driven from very distant places to browse on those savoury herbs to which he gives the name of thyme (meaning the thyme called in the Provençal ferigoule — *thymus capitatus*—which gives the mutton such an excellent flavour). More than three hundred thousand sheep descend at the approach of winter from the Hautes Alpes and Basses Alpes, from La Drôme and L'Isère, in search of a milder temperature, and to feed on this grass, which makes their fleece finer and their flesh more delicate.

The plain is divided into several properties, called coussons, their boundaries being marked by heaps of flints. In each cousson is constructed a hut of reeds to shelter the shepherds, and a stable, also covered with reeds, for the asses provided to follow each flock.

A shepherd arrives from the Alps about the end of September, bringing, with the aid of a *gardien*, a troop of asses, named la poutrayon, to carry the baggage; he lays in immediately a store of wood, repairs the hurdles, and puts all in order for receiving the flock—les anongés, that is to say, the yearling lambs, the sheep and goats arrive at the beginning of November, except the ewes, which do not come till the end of the month.

When the whole flock has met again at the cousson, the sheep to be sold are separated into three divisions. They are folded in hurdles during the night, and the folds are shifted every other day. The shepherds lead a rough and solitary life, having no shelter beyond a hurdle covered with reeds, while they sleep in a sort of basket thatched with a sheepskin, wrapping themselves in a huge blanket, over which they throw a cloak still thicker. They leave their hut to prepare their soup, which is nothing more than brown bread soaked in boiling water, with oil and salt; they supply their bread-bag (panetière) with as much bread as they will want before supper time, fill their flask with a poor, crude and common wine mixed with water, and return to the fold, where, from daybreak, they occupy themselves in attending to the sick animals, and in seeing the lambs fed which have been abandoned by their mothers during the night. At sunrise, each shepherd brings into the cousson allotted to him the portion of the flock entrusted to his charge, without holding any communication with the other shepherds up to evening: at sunset they bring back the flocks to the folds, returning to their hut, where they find new work to do, and a supper as frugal as their dinner; and after this they return to sleep by the fold. The dogs, which are of an original mountain breed, never leave their flocks and are never allowed to enter the huts.

In the month of March, always on a Friday and especially on Good Friday, if it falls in that month, the ears of the lambs are clipped in a form agreed upon for each owner, and, after the shearing, they have their sides branded with a particular mark with melted pitch, or, what is much better, they are marked on the nose with a red-hot iron; the tails of the females are cut below the haunch, that they may not trail in the dirt. They are thus prepared for their journey to the Alps.

When several owners put their flocks together, these partnerships are called *compagnes;* and thus sometimes from twenty to forty thousand animals are collected in one troop. The *bailes* or head-shepherds of each flock appoint a *baile général*, called also *baile comptable*, who looks after the expenditure; his second, called *escriver*, keeps the books; all the *bailes* meet in a general council, to deliberate on important occasions.

Each separate flock, called *escabouet*, is composed of two thousand ewes, which are driven by six men and two dogs. All the flocks do not take the same road, that they may more easily find the means of subsistence; or, if they must travel together, they march at a great distance from each other: the routes traced out for them in Provence are called *drayes* or *carraires*. The *menouns*—thus are called the he-goats—march proudly in the van, having large bells round their necks; the she-goats follow; the sheep and rams come in the rear. The caution of the he-goats saves the rest of the flock from the dangers which their hastiness might bring upon them; if it is necessary to go over a ravine, to cross a brook, or to ford a river, they stop till the shepherd has given them further orders, but

they immediately after advance with decision, and are soon followed by the timid sorts, whom the courage of their guides assures and hurries forward. The *baile général* and his companions bring on the asses, which march in several hundreds in the midst of the *escabouets*. The head quarters are called *la robbe*—hence proceed the orders for the advance, the halt, the encamping, and the rests; here the provisions are collected, and the rations which each shepherd is to carry are given out. If the *baile* does not think his lieutenants' reports satisfactory, he proceeds himself to the spot where his presence seems to be necessary: he watches over everything, and enforces a strict discipline. During their twenty or thirty days' march, the shepherds never relax: at night the flock is again collected, the dogs are stationed at the points most appropriate for defence from the wolves, and the shepherds make their rounds to satisfy themselves that there is nothing to fear.

On the road are *relarguiers* or small feeding grounds, where, for an agreed sum, the flocks can feed. When a halt is necessary, it is the duty of the *baile général* to secure them, or to provide against or compensate the proprietors for any damage from the animals.

On reaching the mountains, the *bailes* establish themselves in a cabin, each shepherd stopping at the ground which he is to occupy. Communication is so difficult, that the shepherds of the same district often do not meet during the whole summer. Bread and goat's milk are their only food; they are not allowed wine so long as they are on the mountains. While their flocks are feeding, they station themselves on an eminence, from whence they can see the whole, and employ themselves with some manual work, or in producing shrill tones from a sharp whistle. The *bailes* make cheese for sale of the sheep's milk, and thus they pass their time till the season of departure returns.

This mode of life is very different from that of the shepherds of Fontenelle, or even those of Virgil and Theocritus. The latter sang bucolic songs to a harmonious flute, and held contests with each other in poetry and music, the prizes being cups of delicate carving—love mixed its pleasures with the charms which a country life bestows under a delicious sky; the shepherds of La Crau and La Camargue live their days in vast deserts, or on the mountains, in the midst of their flocks, braving the rigour of the hoar frost, and defying the storms; they despise our luxury and frivolities—nature recompenses them with an immunity from diseases which are the result of indulgence and dissipation. The kind of life which they lead, whilst it appears so hard to us, attaches them so strongly that they can never abandon it—the smiling aspect of the countries which they have to traverse twice each year, a temperate climate, and delicious fruits, would fail to tempt them; they long to arrive in their nipping deserts to live with their flocks. These children of nature merit the esteem due to useful services, simplicity of manners, and stedfastness of character.]

Note 4, stanza 19, line 5.

"A tomb beneath, whereon
Two chiefs of olden time stand forth in stone."

A portico, with a tomb beneath supporting the figures in stone of two generals.

Half an hour from St. Remy, at the very foot of the Alpines, rise, side by side, two beautiful Roman monuments. The one is a triumphal arch, the other a magnificent mausoleum, built in three stories, ornamented with rich bas-reliefs, and surmounted by a graceful campanile, sustained by ten Corinthian pillars, between which are seen two upright statues. They are the last vestiges of Glanum, a Massilian Colony, destroyed by the barbarians.

[These two monuments are further described as follows by Millin :—

"The first, which is about 50 feet in height, and consists of three parts, has a square base, ornamented on its four sides with bas-reliefs, nearly as large as life and tolerably well executed. On the north side is a skirmish of cavalry; on the west, of infantry; in the foreground are soldiers contending for the body of a warrior, who has fallen in the action: on the south, infantry and cavalry are retreating in confusion, while to the left a wild boar appears to break through a rank of soldiers, and to the right a naked woman is stretched at the feet of a furious horse held with difficulty by some soldiers, and an old man is expiring in the midst of several persons; on the east is represented a triumph, men and women abandoning themselves to transports of joy; in the foreground is a river-god leaning on his urn.

"At the four corners are pilasters without pedestals, with capitals in a fantastic style. The cornice is ornamented with coarse garlands, to which are suspended masks, worn by naked figures.

"The second part is formed of a square structure, pierced at each side, forming four arches, with their mouldings resting on pilasters without bases. These mouldings are ornamented with vine-leaves, and the keystone is a Medusa's head with wings. The four corners are supported by fluted columns, with Corinthian capitals. The frieze is decorated with an arabesque, composed of hippogriffs or winged sea-horses: in the middle are two sirens with large bird's wings.

"The third part consists of ten fluted columns with Corinthian capitals, arranged in a circle; they support a small dome; the frieze is elegantly decorated with leaves, which are picturesque in design and well executed. This small edifice bears the appearance of a round temple. In the midst are two erect figures, the one of a man, the other of a woman; their heads have unfortunately been lost. The frieze of the cupola is surmounted by a strong iron ring, which renders it stronger.

"On the frieze is a Latin inscription, which has been read in so many ways that it cannot be said to throw any light on the subject of the monument.

"The second monument stands to the north of the first, and is a triumphal arch: it is still entire from the ground to the top of the archivault, but the upper part has been destroyed by time. This monument is very small and simple. It had only one arch but little raised, but it was loaded with ornaments. On each side are two fluted columns. The pilasters that support the arch are doric. The capitals act as imposts to the arch, and have a sort of frieze, decorated with different objects and musical instruments employed in sacrifices. The carvings of the archivault represent pine cones, grapes, ivy, and olive branches joined with fillets.

"Between the columns are two figures attached to the wall. Towards the east are two figures, a man and a woman bound to a tree, in the manner used for representing conquered towns and provinces. On the west side is a woman laying her hand on the arm of a warrior in chains; on the other side is a woman seated under trophies, a man near her has his hands tied behind him, and is himself bound to a tree. (Millin, iii. 394, c. 90.)]

Note 5, stanza 29, line 3.

"Véran of Sambuc." Sambuc, a hamlet in the commune of Arles, in the island of Camargue.

Note 6, stanza 29, line 4.

"The star-rayed cabridelle." See note, canto i., stanza 35.

Note 7, stanza 31, line 2.

"The mares of Camargue." La Camargue, derived from καλαμος *reed*, and αγρος, *field*, is a vast delta formed by the bifurcation of the Rhone. This island, which extends from Arles to the sea, contains 186,817 English acres.

The immense distance of its horizons, the imposing silence of its unbroken plains, its strange vegetation, its mirage, its lagoons, its swarms of mosquitoes, its large herds of oxen and wild horses, astonish the traveller, and carry his thoughts to the Pampas of South America.

[The ground is so impregnated with salt, that the water is brackish; the surface of the soil is covered, in summer, with a white saline efflorescence like a coating of snow, and when the pools dry up, the salt forms in a cake two inches thick.

These and other peculiarities of the district form prominent features of the tenth Canto; and it is in its only village, that of Saintes Maries, that the story of the poem concludes.]

Note 8, stanza 32, line 4.

"Till Vaccarés' rewon." Le Vaccarés, on the island of Camargue, is a vast

collection of swamps, salt pools, and lagoons. Vaccarés is formed of the word *vaco*, and the Provençal termination, *arés*, indicating combination, generality. It signifies a place where cows abound.

Note 9, stanza 38, line 2.

"Seven rodes of horses pastured in our meads." The race of wild horses of Camargue is employed to tread out the grain. These animals are reckoned by the rode (wheel, circle). The rode is composed of six *liens*, or pairs, and consequently consists of twelve horses. [This use of the horses will be found more particularly alluded to hereafter (canto viii. st. 49, where see note).]

Note 10, stanza 39, line 5.

"Each must calmly dwell
'Neath his own lamp."

The lighting apparatus in use in the farm-houses of Provence consists of the stem of a reed, and is suspended to the beams of the dining room. It bears a lamp of Roman origin called *calèu*.

Note 11, stanza 46, line 3.

"The drover from Le Sauvage." Le Sauvage, a vast and desert country, called also la petite Camargue, bounded on the east by the Rhone, which separates it from Camargue proper; on the south, by the Mediterranean; on the west and north, by the dead Rhone and the Canal of Aigues-Mortes. It is the principal haunt of the wild black bulls.

Note 12, stanza 49, line 3.

"At the rough ferrade." Ferrade—from ferrum, iron—a pastoral entertainment celebrated at Arles with much preparation. It consists in the driving together of all the young bulls into an enclosed space, in order to mark them with the owner's brand, with a red-hot iron.

[The following description is given by M. Millin:—

"The drovers, mounted on horses of Camargue, assemble at the house where the ferrade is to take place, the owner being designated as maître de la bouvaille; they are all armed with a trident. A substantial repast is prepared for them, and the good wine of La Crau reanimates their strength, and warms their courage. They start and reach the pastures where the animals are accustomed to feed. They then surround them, and force them, with cries and strokes of the trident, to gather in a troop, and press them towards the spot where they are to pass the

night. Some remain to keep guard over them; others return to the lodging which has been prepared for them, where, after having made good cheer, they lie down and sleep on litter.

"During the whole night spectators may be seen arriving; between seven and eight in the morning they are all assembled; and on all sides are seen groups of people collected round the refreshments they have brought with them. About eight o'clock the drovers go in search of the cattle, and, by summoning them as on the preceding evening, they drive them near the lodge prepared for the occasion, which is situated about a quarter of a league from the spot where the ferrade is to be held.

"The carriages, carts, and horsemen armed with three-pronged spears, or carrying in their hands a small stake, assemble at this spot. The carriages are stationed in file, in the form of an oval marked out expressly; each carriage bears some banners, pennants, and streamers, which produce a very pleasing effect. The carriages serve for seats and tiers of benches, and the horses are placed behind. The arena of this species of amphitheatre is covered with people on foot, and men who prepare to try their strength against the bulls.

"At the lower part of the ground is an enormous brasier for heating the branding irons. As soon as the preparations are complete, the master gives the signal with three pistol shots: the drovers and the owners, with a large number of farmers, armed and mounted, leave the circle; they approaeh the herd; some even venture to make their way into it, and force out of it one of the bulls to be marked. The animal quits his companions with pain, especially the cow which has brought him up. A natural inclination draws him back to the spot which he has left, and he makes every effort to return there; but he finds obstacles on all sides, and he is continually thrust back by the two horsemen who are driving him, who follow his steps with wonderful precision, while they escape his attacks with astonishing skill. Sometimes, to deceive his drivers, the bull stops. The horses, which are close to him and at full speed, pass by him, and he profits by this lucky movement to return towards the herd: but the two horsemen ride back, reach him, push him forward still more vigorously, and compel him to enter the enclosure where he is to be branded (ferré). The young women of the farms take part in this strong exercise, and in like manner pursue the heifers, to compel them to come to be marked.

"It sometimes happens that, as he is entering the enclosure, a bull turns to the right or left, when the horses and mules in their fright turn round, neighing and kicking at him, but the drovers soon surround him, and force him in.

"At the entrance are placed some men of tried courage, who await with firmness the furious animal. One of them seizes him, at first by both horns, he then releases one; the bull, anxious to avail himself of this momentary freedom, turns round, when his adversary lays hold of his tail. He moves some steps with him, and he seizes the moment when the bull in running has his legs in the air, to pass

one of his between them. He then instantly gives him a push, and causes him to fall so heavily, that the air echoes with the noise; he next throws himself on him, but he is obliged to yield the palm to the Thessalian hippo-centaurs: he is unable to hold down the animal alone as they did. Fresh combatants come up and seize his horns and legs. The cry of "le fer, le fer" ("the brand, the brand") is immediately heard. One of the drovers instantly brings it: he sometimes presents it to one of the ladies seated in the carriage near which the animal has been thrown down; she descends and arms herself with the brand; the bellowings of the bull, and the smoke which rises from the burning, announce the completion of the operation, and the lady promptly remounts her carriage. A bull sometimes releases himself. When persons of too great curiosity are standing round him, they escape his rage by throwing themselves into the carriages, or slipping under them, or casting themselves on the ground; for, as an old writer on the praises of Provence says, 'the bull only attacks and shows cruelty towards those who resist him' (Quiqueran de Beaujeu—La Provence louée, 1614). He sometimes jumps over without touching them, and as he has no other wish but to escape from a place of such torture, he runs towards the herd, or the field where he is accustomed to graze; but he seldom escapes without having received some blows on the muzzle from the most courageous spectators who have remained in the arena, and defend themselves simply with a small stick, with which they strike the creature so neatly, and so exactly in the nick of time, that they force him to fly. The heifers are, in general, more dangerous than the bulls, and more formidable in their attacks. Cunning and savageness come to the aid of their weakness.

"The same process is repeated as many times as there are animals to mark, sometimes as many as a hundred.

"A bull which was branded the year before is not unfrequently brought into the enclosure; when he is thrown down, the crowd cries, "la sonnaille, la sonnaille," and an immense bell, attached to a wooden collar, is produced; the animal rises stupefied; the noise which he makes every moment, with the cries of "Oh! oh!" which are heard all round provoke him, but he makes his escape at last like the branded beasts.

"While the ferrade lasts, those whom the proprietor has not invited to the great repast, which he ordinarily gives, produce from their baskets the provisions which they have brought, and spread out on the different vehicles the good sausages of Arles, quarters of lamb, turkeys, chickens, and cold pies. The wine of La Crau flows in great floods. The heat of the sun, the night watches, and the fatigue caused by the exercise of the day, with the dances and farandoles which preceded the ferrade, cause a burning thirst, which water alone could quench; but it is often scarce, and costs more than wine.

"The festival is occasionally concluded by the driving into the arena of the whole herd, composed sometimes of more than a hundred cattle, which have

been branded in previous years, men armed with tridents accompanying them. When this numerous cortège has paraded over the enclosure, it makes its exit, and the animals regain their pastures unescorted. Each spectator then takes his way homewards."]

Note 13, stanza 50, line 2.

"From Saintes, Fareman, Aigues-Mortes, and Alberon." Les Saintes—see note 16 to canto i., stanza 40.

Fareman and Alberon, hamlets of La Camargue. Aigues-Mortes, it was at the port of this town that St. Louis twice embarked for the Holy Land, the last time in 1279. Francis I. and Charles V. had an interview there in 1539.

[Aigues-Mortes is now three miles inland. Some have supposed, from the date of St. Louis' embarcation, that the sea has receded since the thirteenth century. Modern investigations have proved the existence of a small port, close to the town, in the walls of which the ancient mooring rings are still to be seen, and of a canal, which is now filled with sand, which extended from the town to the harbour of Grace du Roi, on the sea, and was doubtless the place of rendezvous for the Royal fleet.]

Note 14, stanza 67, line 1.

"Wouldst thou dwell
At Silvaréal, where is heard the sea."

Sylvaréal, a forest of umbrella pines, situated in the lesser Camargue. A small fort, built on the coast to protect the navigation, commands this island, and bears the name of the fort of Sylvaréal.

CANTO V.

THE COMBAT.

Elzéar returns home furious at Mirelle's refusal—The loves of Vincent and Mirelle—The Valisneria spiralis—Meeting of Elzéar and Vincent—Brutal attack by Elzéar—Recriminations—John Bearson—Deadly combat of the two rivals in the desert Cray—Victory and generosity of Vincent—Treachery of Elzéar, who spears Vincent with a blow of his trident and gallops off on his mare—He reaches the Rhone—The three fantastic boatmen—The boat rocks under the weight of the assassin—The night of St. Medard; procession of the drowned on the bank of the river—Dance of the Trèves on the bridge of Trinquetaille.

I.

Fast lengthening shades the silver poplars threw,
Fanned by Ventour's soft breeze—yet had the day
Two hours of life—the ploughman turned to view
The slant progression of the sinking ray,
And chide the moments ere his wife should wait,
To share his entering at the cottage gate.

2

The herdsman sallied forth in bitter ire,
The scorn revolving, which his suit had reaped
Before the fountain—with his brain on fire,
And his brute soul in sullen anguish steeped,
'Twere vain to ask, as heaved his monstrous frame,
If most his brow were red with rage or shame.

3.

Reckless he galloped, and his rage boomed out
In grumbled curses; hate so tore his breast,
That to assuage it, he had joyed to rout
A foe amidst the senseless flints that dressed
The soil of Cray as thick as sloes the tree,
Or aimed to spear the sun—so wroth was he!

4.

The wild boar harried from his darkwood lair,
And o'er Olympus' naked crests pursued,[1]
Ere he will turn, his baying foes to tear,
That thus insult his mountain solitude,
His bristling terrors points to every wind,
And whets his weapons on the oaken rind.

5.

While thus his sullen heart resentment stings,
Across his path by chance young Vincent trips
In native grace; while thoughts of pleasant things
Beam in his eye and dance upon his lips,
He thinks, mayhap, of what the loving maid
One morn had whispered 'neath the mulberry shade.

6.

Straight is his step as bulrush of Durance;
Love, peace, and happiness his features ray;
His open shirt betrays his breast's expanse,
Where for his cool regalement zephyrs play;
Onward he rambles o'er the pebbles blithe,
Or forward shoots, like lizard gay and lithe.

7.

Now many a time, when dawn laughed fresh and fair,
Or soon as earth had mantled her in shade,
And tender trefoil from the chilling air
Sheathed its three frondlets, for the farm he made,
Watched round the loved one's home with restless eye,
And fluttered, troubled as the butterfly.

8.

Then from his leafen covert he would feign
The note of quail or plover's pipe more shrill;
The wakeful maiden heard it not in vain;
The sound was music to her ear and will:
Askirt the hawthorn hedge she'd stealthy glide,
Nor still her heart till at her lover's side.

9.

The moon that tinges with her silver beams
The buds of asphodel, the summer air,
That with the dayfall o'er the furrow streams,
And rocks the bearded ears with gentle care,
(The motion's charms their bended heads attest,
That wave like dreams in loving maiden's breast);

10.

The joy supreme of chamois that has heard
From morn to eve the hunters on his track
Amidst the rocks of Queyras, when, like bird [2]
Pois'd on a needle peak, he looketh back,
And, 'midst his loved larch groves and glaciers rude,
Tastes the recovered joys of solitude:

11.

All these were but as droppings of the dew,
Beside the fervour, each from other's eyes,
That the rapt lovers from these moments drew;
But trees have ears—we'll be, my lips, more wise;
Couched 'neath the drooping covert of the tree,
Their mutual hands met slowly, waveringly.

12.

Then in their speech long pauses crept and went;
Idly their feet would thrust the flints away;
The lad, for lack of other argument,
Novice in love, would laughingly pourtray
The falls and crosses that his path would try,
And make his bed but curtained by the sky;

13.

And how his thigh the mottled scars disclosed,
Which teeth of farm-dogs in its flesh had drilled.
And next, Mirelle a humble tale composed,
Of busy days and household cares fulfilled;
Her parents' homely counsellings—the bower
The goat had ravaged when most proud with flower.

14.

Once Vincent, all o'ermastered by his love,
Stretched on the rough grass of their lone retreat,
As crouching wild-cat towards his prey will move,
Crept slow and noiseless to his mistress' feet;
But trees have ears—my lips, we'll softlier speak;
"Mirelle, but once, oh! dare I kiss thy cheek?"

15.

"Long time my lips, Mirelle, have known no food;
I live but on the love thou giv'st to me;
Oh! could I ope my veins, and in my blood
Lock up thy breath, that winds steal off and flee!
At least, in pity, let me lie and gem
With kisses morn till morn thy garment's hem."

16.

"Vincent, therein were darkening sin and shame;
The linnets and all heralds of the air
Will lovers' secrets gather and proclaim."
"Fear not their tongues, to-morrow will I bare
All Cray to Arles of linnets' spites; but sure
In thee, Mirelle, is Paradise more pure.

17.

"Oh! list, Mirelle," spake Master Ambrose' son,
"There grows in Rhone a plant, the name it bears,
The Naiad's Tress, 'tis rather two than one,
For two disjointed stalks and flowers it rears;
In the cool springs beneath the stream it cowers;
But when the season call of love o'erpowers,

18.

"One flower its twin creation quits, and won
Alone the surface of the laughing stream,
Its bud to blossom gladdens in the sun;
Startled to see it thus with charms abeam,
The other strives alike to float above,
And greet its partner with the kiss of love.

19.

"It strives its spiral stamen to uncoil,
And cast the shackles of the clammy weed,
Till as, poor wretch, success remits its toil,
Though free, yet dying, on its broken reed,
Scarce its wan lips its pallid sister greet:
One kiss, Mirelle, unseen, and death were sweet."

20.

Blanched was her cheek, in rapture as he gazed,
Then like to wild-cat frenzied, up he sprung;
From her soft side infuriate, amazed,
His reckless hand the indignant maiden flung,
Which round her supple waist meanwhile he threw;
Her wrath but charms the onset to renew:

21.

But trees have ears—my lips, we'll softlier speak:
She screamed, and bid him from her sight away,
And in the conflict turned her—cheek 'gainst cheek
The youth fast pressed, and, much that she mote pray,
With his mad arm embraced her beauteous head;
She strove, then cunning stooped, and laughing, fled.

22.

Thus disentangled from his rude caress,
"Linguéto!" chimed she at her frolic cheat;4
So in the twilight, in their guilelessness,
These two, moonlighted, stole the parents' wheat; 5
Blest hours that Heav'n as flowering manna rains
With equal hand on heads of kings and swains.

23.

One eve it chanced that on the plain of Cray,
The fair young suppler of the osier reeds
Elzéar met upon their different way;
'Gainst the first tree its rage the thunder speeds;
His brute limbs quivering as with palsy stroke,
The ruffian tyrant of the bulls outbroke:

24.

"And art thou he that doth bewitch Mirelle,
Thou harlot's son? Howbeit, ragged lout,
Thou sneak'st down there—so this my message tell,
That I care for her, and her weazel snout,
As for the tattered slops, that ope to day
Thy filthy skin. Hear'st thou, sweet popinjay?"

25.

Started the youth, and all his manhood woke
Like sudden flame; his heart, as volcan fire,
Swelled to be free. "Churl, wouldst thou that I broke
Thy clownish spine, or doubled thee as wire
In my fell gripe?" he cried with deadly glance,
As leopard starved that views some prey askance.

26.

With wrath he writhed, his purple flesh the while
Heaved heavily; the other stern commands,
"Headlong prepare to roll, thou caitiff vile,
And hug the gravel with thy puny hands;
Thou wast but made, poor thief, thy withes to bark,
Or lurk and dodge a vagrant in the dark."

27.

"But as my withes I twist," replied the youth,
Angered to fury by the maddening taunt,
Thy throat I'll twist—fly, or as God is truth,
Coward, thou'lt find I breathe no childish vaunt;
No more yon tamarisks to behold prepare,
Thy bones my fist shall pound to dust the air."

28.

Perplexed to see a foe on whom his rage
To hurl,—"One moment, just one moment," cried
The sullen kine-herd. "Take we time, young sage,
To light a pipe." A purse of shaggy hide
From out his pouch displaying as he spoke,
Thence a black pipe he drew, and feigned to smoke.

29.

And thus he gibed, "When 'neath the tenting tree
Thy gipsy mother cradled thee, did ne'er
She croak to thee John Bearson's history, [6]
The double man who erst times used to pare
His master's stubble with a yoke of beeves?
Just as a herd a recreant goat upheaves,

30.

"The beasts he'd hurl all harnessed, with their plough,
And pitch them struggling on a poplar's crest;
'Tis well for thee no poplar tempts me now,
Thou vile-born wretch." "Foul swine of evil jest,
Though wounding words thy braggart tongue can wield,
Thou couldst not draw an ass from out the field."

31.

As in his gaze the deerhound holds the stag,
So he his foe; with Titan voice he roared,
"Say, swaggering tosspot, thou whose gait is brag,
Thy sorry jade dismount, or, by the Lord,
I'll pluck thee down—dost yield? dost yield? We'll test
Who drew his milk from truest mother's breast.

32.

"Wouldst bully me? upon thee will I stamp,
As hinds on corn, who'dst foul with filthy lie
The virgin of yon house, Mirelle, the lamp
Of beauty to the land, her champion I,
I, Vincent, basket boy, have will and power,
If thou hast blood, therein thy lie to scour."

33.

But howls the drover, "Gipsy fool, avast,
Champion of scullion drabs, thy match beware;"
Quick he dismounts, away their garments cast,
Blow echoes blow, and quails the startled air;
The loosened flints roll 'neath their bounding feet;
Like maddened bulls with deadly rush they meet.

34.

On hot savanna when two bulls espy
(As the high sun spurs all things with his fire),
A heifer shining-skinned of golden dye,
Of comely croup, and lowing her desire,
Thrill their huge frames with passion's lightning birth,
And strong and blind with love they spurn the earth

35.

With mutual hate they gaze, then mutual close,
With like mad fury clash, and charge again,
Each to the echoing earth his muzzle throws,
Their heads and horns dash thunder through the plain:
Savage and long the war that love inspires,
All-ruling love, that blinds the soul it fires.

36.

Thus did these rivals cruelly engage,
Thus on each head were hailed rebounding blows;
The first great wound refreshed Elzéar's rage,
But as with like his foe the strife would close,
One second o'er his head his hand he held,
Then with its cyclops stroke lay Vincent felled.

37.

"Ha! wretch, why not that pretty present ward?"
"Feel, have I graved thee, braggart?" thus they railed;
"Bastard, to count the wounds were task too hard
Wherein my finger-points shall be impaled;"
"And thou, vile monster, sum the clots of gore
That paint thy flesh more hideous than before."

38.

And now they clasp and hug, now crouch and spring
Aloft, 'gainst shoulder shoulder pressed, and toe
Pricking 'gainst toe—their arms they lace and wring
As deadly serpent coils around his foe,
Beneath their skins their veins in cables rise,
And starts each sinew of their legs and thighs.

39.

Long stand they fixed while palpitate their sides,
As fledgling bustard flaps his ponderous wing;
No limb they stir, no more the tongue derides;
Each 'gainst the other's buttressed as they cling,
So two huge piers with strength opposed sustain
The mighty bridge that towers o'er Gardon's plain.[7]

40.

Sudden they part, again their fists they clench,
Again the pestle in the mortar pounds;
Now with their teeth they tear, with fingers wrench,
No weapon scorns the rage, no pity bounds;
Good God! while Vincent smites him as with doom,
What Titan hammerings from the monster boom.

41.

Sharp strikes his hand and heavy as the flail;
But Valabrègue may glory in her son;
His blows fall thick and nimble as the hail;
Now round the threat'ning wretch he'll bound and run
Like circling sling—then cry, "Cursed ruffian, see,
At length the blow to crush thy sins and thee!"

42.

But while he's back inclined, his weight to hurl
Full on the foe, the bullock-feller stoops,
And, as in Provence able wrestlers whirl
Their rivals, gripes and o'er his shoulder swoops
The lad, as one who shovels wheat afar
Behind his back, and thinks to end the war.

43.

"Then gather up that rood of earth thy snout
So ably ploughed, or, an thou dust affect,
Eat, worm, and drink." "Cease, nauseous beast, to flout,
Not ere three falls they give are victors decked;"
As more his breast the mounting hate extends
E'en to his crown the blush of shame ascends.

44.

Up as a springing dragon bounds the lad,
Like wrestler vowed to save his name or die,
And, to o'erthrow Camargue's wild ruffian mad,
Gathers his strength a conquering blow to ply;
Such power was ne'er in arm so young compressed,
It falls and echoes on the giant's breast.

45.

Staggers the Camarguese, his palsied limbs
He strives to rule, what time a dismal haze
Sickens his sight, and all around him swims,
Great streaks of icy sweat his features glaze;
As a tall tower that shakes the plain around,
The great Elzéar thunders on the ground.

46.

All in vast Cray is silent and serene;
Its distant verge is smelted in the main;
'Twixt sea and blended sky no bound is seen;
Flame-winged flamingoes, swans in courtly train,
And lustrous coots with homage mute adore
The passing day that wanes along the shore.

47.

Browsing, the drover's steed, his grey mare, strolled
'Mid the holm oaks—his empty stirrups like
Vast iron hoops swung to and fro, and tolled
Against her belly—"An thou stir I strike,
And end thee, brigand; now, mayhap, thou'lt own
Man's worth is scarce by rule and measure known."

48.

In the deep silence of that solemn hour
The basket-boy with feet victorious pressed
The fallen herdsman: with his cyclops power
Elzéar strives to free his shattered chest;
Each breath a pang—his lips and nostrils throw
Big jets of blood that blacken as they flow.

49.

Thrice would he shake the fettering heel away,
Thrice cotter Ambrose' osier bending lad
Fell blow implanted while the caitiff lay
Bruised in the flints and impotently mad;
Foaming he heaved, haggard his eyes, agape
His mouth, like ocean imp of hideous shape.[8]

50.

"So, pirate, so not of thy dam alone
Do all male offspring come," thus Vincent mocks;
"To Silvaréal, to thy beasts begone,
Recount my arm's weight to thy favourite ox;
Drag to Camargue thy battered limbs and fame,
Hide 'midst thy bulls thine insolence and shame."

51.

He ceased, and shook the savage from his grasp;
A shearer in the fold betwixt his knees,
A sturdy ram while spoiling him will clasp;
On his shorn flank he strikes him as he frees;
Murky with dust, and quivering with wrath,
So bounded up the drover and rushed forth.

52.

Urged by some thought accursed, o'er brake and bound
Swearing he hies—what seeks he far and near,
Howling amid the oaks, and tangled ground?
Ha! ha! he stops, oh! horror! his huge spear,
His goad three-deathed around his head he whirls
And his brute self and spear on Vincent hurls.

53.

He, as he viewed the mortal lance so nigh,
No help, no hope, was pale as dying hour;
Though 'tis not hard to bravery to die,
What nature would not 'neath the measure cower,
That he, the strong and victor in the field,
To felon's craft his nobler life must yield?

54.

"And dar'st thou, traitor?" scarcely he upbraids,
Then firm as martyr stops, and waits his doom;
Far off and slumbering in the stately shades
Lies the loved Croft whence took his life its bloom;
He turns, and seems to pray with tranquil sigh,
"Mirelle, look on me, 'tis for thee I die."

55.

Ah! faithful Vincent, still but dreamed thy soul
Of her it loved. "Be instant with thy prayer"
Elzéar thundered with a demon's howl,
And pierced the youth his baseness could not spare.
With one loud groan he deprecates his pain,
And bleeding, senseless, rolls upon the plain.

56.

Bruised by his fall the purple herbage lies,
The ants at check his limbs already score,
Wearing their road anew—the drover hies
At gallop moonlit o'er the flinty moor;
And as he speeds yells forth with hellish jeer,
"The wolves of Cray to-night will bless their cheer."

57.

All in vast Cray is silent and serene,
Its distant verge is smelted in the main;
'Twixt sea and blended sky no bound is seen;
Flame-winged flamingoes, swans in courtly train,
And lustrous coots with homage mute adore
The passing day that wanes along the shore.

58.

On, bull-herd, on, ply spur nor tighten rein;
"Ha! ha!" green herons mocked him with their cries,
As would they urge his beast to greater strain
Than swelled her ears, her nostrils, and her eyes;
O'er slumbering Rhone the silent moonbeams glid,
The sky his curtain and his coverlid,

59.

Like pilgrim of Ste. Baume who naked dreams [10]
Of toilsome day o'er wide and sullen wold
In some soft hollow arteried with streams.
"Ho, hear ye? ho! a boat—on deck or hold
My beast and me ye'll ferry o'er the tide,"
From far the coward to three boatmen cried.

60.

"Quick, quick, brave rake," a jesting voice replies,
"To wait the mounting of the lamp of night,
'Twixt oars and gaff the impatient fishes rise,
And frisk, the fools, with innocent delight;
The moment's good, no dallying time afford
The flashing shoals, so smart, and jump abroad."

61.

On the poop sat apart the felon churl; [11]
The mare, her halter to the taffrail fast,
Swam in the wake, great fishes scaled in pearl
And dyes unnumbered sparkled as they passed
Around the prow from out their river caves,
And sprang, and flounced and woke Rhone's sleeping waves.

62.

"Ha! pilot, have a care, the bark, I trow,
Begins to shamble," and the speaker strained
Hard on his stretcher, bending as a bow,
Or as a vine-branch curves 'tween poplars trained:
"Yea, sure some evil-omened freight we bear,"
The pilot spake, then sat as lost in care.

63.

The old boat wabbled, starboard now, now port,
It rolled and tottered as a palsied man;
The old boat was in sooth in sorry sort,
The worm already through its timbers ran;
"God's thunder," screamed the drover as he grasped
The helm, and, rising, struck with horror, gasped.

64.

Now more and more, by power unseen upheaved,
It turns and twists as serpent writhes with pain,
Whose spine a shepherd with a stone hath cleaved;
"Whence those rude shocks? what, comrades, think ye [then
To drown me?" Thus the herd apostrophised
The oarsmen pale as light decolorised.

65.

"I'm lord no longer or of helm or prow,"
The pilot cried; "she runs and plunges wild
Above the surface, as the carp below;
Thou'st done a murder, wretch!" "I? who beguiled
Thee thus? If true, may Satan clutch and steep
My soul in torments in his hellest deep."

66.

"Ah!" sighs the pilot wan, "my error's clear,
Bethink me now St. Medard's eve it is;
When each drowned wretch must on the earth appear,
From whirlpool dread, and infinite abyss,
How deep soe'er his worm-drilled bones have lain;
Musters e'en now the unsubstantial train.

67.

"Lo, the poor wailing ghosts—lo, how they climb
Barefoot the flinty bank—the muddy ooze
From their bedrabbled garments dank with slime
Foully with ponderous drops the earth bedews;
Beneath yon poplar shades that dim the strand
They march in file, a taper in each hand.

68.

"See, how they gaze and contemplate the stars!
When from their prison in the sandy bed
Their stiffened legs they wrench, and arms with scars
And bruises livid, while around the head
Clings slabby silt—'tis thus with upward shocks
Our boat they maim, as tempest-tost on rocks.

69.

"Still, still they rise, and up the rushes swarm
In horrid strife—they sup the limpid air;
Sweet sights of Cray they quaff, and sniff the balm
Of harvest scents—how sweet the motion rare,
As they regard their vesture dripping rain!
Each breath another quits the fetid drain.

70.

"Old men and young, and woman forms I view"
The ferry chieftain adds; "and off they shake
The filth and foulness of the fishy stew,
Fleshless and toothless, fishers who would take
The carp and lamprey—men of inverse fate,
Whom since, alas! the carp and lamprey ate.

71.

"But, lo, the flitting crowd, and mark them well,
Who, hopeless mourners, creep along the grove;
The damsels, lorn of love, constrained to dwell
Far, far from those their beauty taught to love;
Desperate, to Rhone a cell to beg they came,
Wherein to drown the grief they could not tame.

72.

"See them, poor virgins, through the filmy gloom
Their naked bosoms rattle as they beat
Beneath the weeds that chain them to their doom;
While on their drabbled locks that clothe their feet,
And mask their faces, pity looks and fears
Not water gushes out, but bitter tears."

73.

The pilot ceased—the spirits, flame in hand,
Silent and slow along the margin glid;
You might have heared a midge's wings expand;
"But, pilot, whilst all seems in darkness hid,
Beseems thee not around they search and peer?"
Said he of Camargue in unholy fear.

74.

"Ah, what a search is theirs," the pilot saith;
"See how all round, poor shades, their gaze is thrown
To seek their good works, or their acts of faith,
Which, few or many, in the flesh they'd sown;
Soon as one precious jewel they espy,
They run like sheep that scent fresh darnel nigh,

75.

"And to it bound; once gathered in the hand,
From the sweet work a flower yet sweeter springs,
And, when enough are won for wreathen band,
Joyful to God the blessed gleaner brings
The flowers, and on St. Peter's altar lays;
Those whom death musters in his countless ways,

76.

"The unshriven drowned, by heavenly grace are lent
A respite time, their forfeit to redeem;
But see 'fore dawn-rise what great hosts are sent
To seek again their graves beneath the stream;
Haters of God, devourers of His poor,
Murderers and traitors, for the worm a store.

77.

"One saving work they seek, but only flit
On river grit o'er sins and deadly deeds
To flints calcined, that irk the unsandalled feet,
No trick or wile the step of doom impedes;
But as beneath the roaming wave they lie,
They ever pray the mercy of the sky."

78.

As bandit lurking where the highways meet,
Elzéar seized his arm; "A leak we've sprung;"
"And here's wherewith the water to defeat;"
Calm he replied. Elzéar filled and flung
The waves that quicker than his work advanced;
On Trinquetaille bridge the Trèves that midnight danced. [12]

79.

Bale, bale, Elzéar—up, and bale again!
Against the halter strains the maddened mare;
"What ails thee, fool? What, fear'st thou too dead men?"
Her master cried, while bristled stood his hair;
But silently ascends the swallowing deep;
And now its eddies 'gainst the gunwale sweep.

80.

"No swimmer am I, captain—think'st to save
The boat?" "Ah! no; two winks and she goes down,
And strikes the bottom—but the dead who drave
Thy senses from thee, will not that we drown;
See by their spectre files a rope is thrown."
He spoke, the boat ingulphed was lost in Rhone.

81.

And in the far obscure, from shore to shore,
A cord that gleamed with lightning brightness flew
Cast by the pale lamps that the spirits bore
In their drowned quivering hands—along her clew
That o'er the grass she threw ere early sun
As dewy gossamer delights to run,

82.

So up the effulgence rocking in the tide
The fishermen, who claimed the Witches' kin,
From end to end mid-light like phantoms plied;
Elzéar choking 'mid the water's din,
To clutch the rope in vain his hands advanced,
On Trinquetaille bridge the Trèves that midnight danced.

NOTES ON CANTO V.

Note 1, stanza 4, line 2.

"And o'er Olympus' naked crests pursued." Olympus, a high mountain, between the Var and the Bouches du Rhone.

Note 2, stanza 10, line 3.

"Amidst the rocks of Queyras." Queyras, a valley of the Hautes Alpes.

Note 3, stanza 17, line 2.

"There grows in Rhone a plant, the name it bears
Is Naiad's Tress."

Herbette aux Boucles, *Valisneria spiralis*—a plant found in the Rhone, and in the meres round Tarascon and Arles.

[The following is from the *English Cyclopædia*. Under the head "Spiral Structures," it is said: "A remarkable instance of spiral structure connected with function is seen in the Valisneria, which is a water plant. The female flowers spring to the surface of the water in summer, at the time the male flowers have perfected their pollen, and scattered it upon the surface of the water. As soon as the pollen is conveyed to the female flower, its spiral stem becomes contracted, and its fruit is perfected at the bottom of the water." The account of the plant itself is as follows:—

After its scientific description, the writer continues: "The economy of these plants is exceedingly interesting in a physiological point of view. They are plants growing at the bottom of the water, and yet the male and female flowers are separated, and the mode by which they are brought together affords a singular instance of adaptation. These plants generally grow in running waters, and thus render the difficulty of the contact of their flowers greater. This is effected by the elongated peduncles of the pistilliferous flowers reaching the surface of the water when the staminiferous flowers are floating along. The Valisneria spiralis is found in Italy, in ditches near Pisa and in the Rhone. There are species in Australia, America, and the East Indies. The latter is the *hydrillus*

of Dr. Hamilton, and is used in Hindostan, under the name of Jangi, for the purpose of supplying water mechanically to sugar during the progress of refining."

I am told that specimens of the Valisneria are on sale at Covent Garden market, for the amusement of the drawing-room and sick-room.

As I cannot find that it has received any English name, I venture to propose that which I have given.]

Note 4, stanza 22, line 2.

"Linguéto." Linguéto, a Provençal word, [which a note in the original describes as untranslateable into French, and which consequently may be considered so into English.] It is used in laughing at another, and pointing out something far off, or high up, to excite his desire for it.

"Quasi bramosi fanciulli e vani
Che pregano, e 'l pregato non risponde,
Ma per fare esser ben lor voglia acuta,
Tien alto lor disio, e nol nasconde."

Dante Purgatorio, c. 24.

Note 5, stanza 22, line 4.

"These two, moonlighted, stole the parents' wheat." Blé de lune (blad de luno), properly faire de blad de luno, means to steal wheat from one's parents by moonlight. Blad de luno figuratively, signifies lovers' tricks. [The French translation does not agree with this explanation, being "ils semaient au crépuscule leur joli blé de lune," recalling to English ears the sowing of wild oats.]

Note 6, stanza 29, line 3.

"John Bearson's history." Jean de l'Ours, a hero of fireside tales, a kind of Provençal Hercules, to whom is attributed a host of exploits. He was the son of a shepherdess and of a bear which had carried her away, and had, as companions in his glory, two adventurers of fabulous strength. One was named Arrache-Montagne, and the other Pierre de Moulin. M. Hippolite Babou has given the history of Jean de l'Ours in his *Païens Innocents*.

Note 7, stanza 39, line 6.

"The mighty bridge that towers o'er Gardon's plain." Le pont du Gard. [This wonderful work of ancient art is a Roman aqueduct, three leagues from Nismes, built on the River Gardon or Gard, which rises in the Cevennes and runs from west to east between the Chateau de St. Privas and the village of Remoulins. This curious edifice is not seen till the spectator is close to it, which makes his surprise so much the greater.

The excellence of the water of the Airan and Eure, which is attested by several ancient inscriptions, has doubtless gained it the preference over the waters in the more immediate neighbourhood. It was necessary that the water of the Airan should cross the Gardon, the banks of which are very steep. To raise the aqueduct to their summit, two tiers of large arches have been constructed, and a third tier of smaller arches, which crowns them, supports the water-way. The first tier is composed of six arches, and under the last but one is the ordinary channel of the river, which only reaches the others at times of extraordinary rising, its length is 518 feet, and its height 62 feet. The second tier is composed of eleven arches, of which the close and the open (pleins et vides) correspond with those of the lower tier. Its height is the same, but its length, 780 feet. The third tier consists of thirty-five much smaller arches, four occupying the same space as one below. This tier is only 24 feet high, its length is 819 feet. Thus the height of the whole is 148 feet, whilst the greatest length is 819 feet.

The water-way is only 4 feet wide and 5 feet high in the clear. It is coated internally with a layer of cement 3 inches thick, and a plaster of very fine red bole. The bottom is formed of small stones, lime and gravel, which make a layer of excellent mortar 8 inches thick. It is as perfect as if it were just laid down. All the stone was taken from the neighbouring quarries.

The building of this aqueduct has been attributed to an architect named Veranius, whose name is said to have been engraved on one of the piles in uncial letters, but as it is not to be found, the name of the architect must remain in uncertainty. The falsehood of an inscription, which ascribes it to Antoninus Pius, has been proved. It may, with more probability, be attributedto Agrippa, to whom Nismes is indebted for four high roads, and for his general direction of its supplies of water.

The Gardon is liable to sudden floods, which render its passage impracticable, even in a ferry-boat. In the beginning of the Sixteenth Century, an attempt was made to form a bridge on the first tier of arches, and with this object the pillars of the second tier were sloped away; but this operation, the suggestion of ignorance, would soon have caused the fall of the structure, had not the injured pillars been restored to their strength in 1699, when there was left merely a narrow path for foot passengers and horses. As this was not sufficient for the public needs, the estates of Languedoc constructed a bridge against the eastern end. This work was begun in 1743.]

Note 8, stanza 49, line 6.

"His mouth, like ocean imp of hideous shape." The Baudroie is here intended, called also diable-de-mer.

Note 9, stanza 58, line 2.

"Green herons mock him with their cries." Esclapaire, a green heron that feeds on crabs. A bird of the order of échassiers, called esclapaire (which means splitter of wood), from its cry, Ha! Ha!

Note 10, stanza 59, line 1.

"Like pilgrim of Ste. Baume." Sainte Baume, a celebrated grotto, in the midst of a primeval forest, near St. Maximin, to which St. Mary Magdalene retired to perform acts of penance, as related in note 16, canto i., stanza 40. [Nearly all the sovereigns of France made pilgrimages to this grotto; among others, the mother and wife of Francis the First, Anne of Austria, and even Louis XIV. It was destroyed during the Revolution, and the colossal statue of the saint broken to pieces. An attempt was made by the Archbishop of Aix to restore it.]

Note 11, stanza 61, line 1.

"On the poop sat apart the felon churl." The author has not attempted to translate otherwise than by scélérat, mauvais sujet, sacrapant, the Provençal word "fena," of which he says that Horace conveys the meaning in speaking of a reprobate—*Fenum habet in cornu.* This was a proverb among the Romans, and the expression came into use when it was the custom to put hay on the horns of dangerous bulls, to give notice of their propensities.

Note 12, stanza 78, line 6.

"On Trinquetaille bridge the Trèves that midnight danced." Trinquetaille, a faubourg of Arles, situated in the Camargue, and connected with the city by a bridge of boats.

The Trèves are goblins which dance on the heads of the waves, when the sun or the moon is reflected in the water.

CANTO VI.

THE SORCERESS.

At dawn of day three swineherds find Vincent stretched in the desert of Cray and bathed in his blood—They carry him in their arms to the Cornel Croft—Digression—The Poet's address to his friends the poets of Provence—Grief of Mirelle—Vincent is carried to the cavern of Fays, the abode of the Spirits of Night, and the habitation of the Sorceress Tavène, the charmer of all ills—The Fays—Mirelle accompanies her lover into the excavations of the mountain—The Mandragore—The apparitions in the cavern—The Will-o'-the-wisp—The Imp of Sport—the Lavandière of the Ventour—Recitations of the Sorceress—The Mass of the dead—The Sabbath—The Garamande—The Gripet—The Bambarouche—The Nightmare—The Escharinches—The Dracs—The Dog of Cambal—The Baron Castillon—The Black Lamb—The Golden Goat—Tavène charms Vincent's wound—Exaltation and prophecies of the Sorceress.

I.

Soft dawn is wedded to the lark's soft lay;
Enamoured earth, to greet her bridegroom sun,
Is clothed in freshest blushings of the day;
So trustful maid, by lover's magic won,
In choicest robings of her store bedight,
Waits him who whispered "Fly we ere the light."

2.

Three men were plodding o'er the wilds of Cray;
Three swineherds from St. Chamas' fair returned;
There had they sold their herds—now on their way,
They talked of business done, and prices earned;
Each of his cloak his treasury had made
(As custom is), and o'er his shoulder laid.

3.

"Hist! softly, comrades," suddenly one cried;
"Methought but now amidst the heath there doled
A sound of groaning." "Bah!" the two replied,
"St. Martin's bell, or that of Maussane tolled,[1]
Or the north-wind from mountain gorge unpent
Provoked remonstrance from the oaks it bent."

4.

They spoke, and halted, as an agony
To burst the heart-strings spoke them from the gorse;
"Mother of God!" they cried beseechingly,
And piously they traced the Holy Cross;
Then with hush'd footsteps nearer yet they drew,
Where with each gasp the groans more piteous grew.

5.

Oh! sight of horror! on the flinty floor,
'Mid tangled grass the wounded Vincent lay;
His face was clotted to the earth with gore,
The trampled soil gave token of the fray;
Around, his osier rods were scattered wide,
Nor his torn breast his shriven shirt could hide.

6.

For in the field where all was loneliness,
Save that the stars their silent vigil kept,
Had swooned away the night of his distress
The wounded lad, till o'er his eyelids swept
The brush of dawn, the air with gentle sighs
His veins requickened, and unlocked his eyes.

7.

Then the three men their road renounced (good hearts),
And knelt all three their mantles to unfold,
And frame a cradle of their softest parts:
Soon in its bed the wounded youth they rolled,
And bore him, treading as three mothers soft,
To the near welcome of the Cornel Croft.

8.

Friends of my youth, bold poets of Provence,
Who courteous list my tale of ancient time,
Thou, Roumanille, so skilful to entrance
With wreaths of thought, sweet growth of sunny clime,
And interwove with people's tears to sing
Soft maiden laughter and the flowers of spring;

9.

Thou who the light and gloom of stream and fell,
The fresh and dim, thy dreamy heart to glad,
Dost ever seek, aspiring Aubanel,
Crousillat too, whose name Touloubre hath clad [2]
In glory bright as once her pride decreed
To Nostradamus, who the stars could read; [3]

10.

And I must sing thee, Matthew Anselme, who
Didst meditate, beneath thy trelliced bower,
The maiden charms thou lov'st to paint so true;
And Paul, so well who wield'st the railer's power,
And thee, Tavan, whose peasant strains have made
Sweet concord with the crickets round thy spade;

11.

And thee who in Durance' great overflow
Wilt plunge thy soul, who joyest 'neath our sun
Thy native French to bask to warmer glow,
Adolphe Dumas, who (scarce her life begun)
Didst guide my Mirelle, quivering with affright,
To ripen far from home in Paris light.

12.

And last I greet thee, thee, who winged with fire,
Some inspiration ravishes and goads,
Garcin, thou ardent son of hero sire;
And if my ripening fruit its prime forebodes,
At every upward step, blest bards, combine
My path to freshen with your breath divine.

13.

"Good morrow, Master Raymond," said the three,
And crossed his threshold; "this poor lad we've found
Down on the heath in this extremity:
Some tender lint thou'lt seek to staunch this wound
That's ploughed his bosom;" and while thus they said,
On the stone settle was young Vincent laid.

14.

Quick as these signs of woe Mirelle descried,
She from the garden ran (she there had piled
With herbs the basket pendant from her side);
Like ran the frighted hinds—dismayed and wild
Her arms she lifts, and Heaven's mild Queen bespeaks,
As falls her load, in words perplexed with shrieks.

15.

"Who, Vincent, who alas! this evil wrought,
And dyed thee in thy blood?" His head she raised,
His head so loved; as thinking without thought
Prostrate and dumb, like thing of stone she gazed,
Big tears in torrent eloquence expressed,
Flooded the gentle bossings of her breast.

16.

His loved one's hand the wistful lover knew;
With dying voice he strove to call on God:
"Thou gracious Lord, Thy child with pity view,
For deep's my sorrow for the path I've trod;
I need Thine hand to staff me on my way."
"Bring agriotat," cried Raymond, "and allay 4

17.

"His thirst"—"Drink quick, the draught hath life within;"
The maiden urged and prompt the flagon seized,
As drop by drop she pours, her sweet words win
His lips' collusion, and his ill's appeased.
Anew he speaks—"God crown thee for thy care,
And ward from thee the ills that I must bear.

18.

"As I incautious 'gainst my bosom pressed
A stubborn osier that I sought to cleave,
My knife ill-hafted slipped, and pierced my breast."
For her he bled, but therefore should she grieve?
But to the honey as the fly is led,
His words spontaneous to his love resped;

19.

"Not half so bitter is my wound to me
As the dear anguish of thy pitying face;
The pretty corbel we commenced in glee
Must lie unfinished, and its weft unlace;
How have I thought, Mirelle, all neatly wove,
To see it laughing-full of thy sweet love.

20.

"But stay thee there awhile that I may gaze
On those soft eyes, and drink some life anew;
No more I ask, and yet one boon I'd raise
Which for the basket-lad thou ne'er wilt rue;
My poor old father, who shall bring him bread,
By years o'erweighted, and to labour dead?"

21.

Sore grieves Mirelle, but still his wound she laves;
One tender velvet from a scarf unbinds,
One hastes to mountain slopes, one, dripping caves,
And healing herb, or cooling potion finds;
Jeanne Marie cries, in faith of prompter ways,
"Oh! bear him, bear him to the Grot of Fays.

22.

"Great as the evil, great the witch's power;"
Straight to the grotto in the vale of Hell,
Four stout hearts bear him; there like ramparts tower
Baux' peaks to build a mountain citadel;
Here scaly salamanders slime the ground,
And swooping sakers taint the air around.

23.

Flush with the rock, its inlet blocked with gloom
Of rosemary, a spacious cavern cowers;
Since Holy Angelus began to boom
From hallowed bells the Blessed Virgin's hours,
The ancient elves far in its deepest night
For ever shun the horrors of the light.

24.

Mysterious sprites, half matter and half air,
That through a limpid twilight ever glid;
Whom, half terrestial, God created fair
And female (be the semblance not forbid)
Essential souls vouchsafed the land to train,
And primal man's dread savagery retain.

25.

But such the beauty of these sons of men,
That in the Fays they lit the flame of love;
Our passions their impassioned natures stain;
They raised not mortals to the spheres above;
But to our doom of dark debasement fell,
As soaring birds beneath the charmer's spell.

26.

The horrid portal of the cavern found,
The bearers down its jagged and narrow jaws
Let Vincent slide, and turned in terror round;
Who would not at the dread entombment pause,
Save Mirelle, who, with love's emboldenment shod,
At every step commended her to God?

27.

Reached now the bottom of the wizard pit,
A grotto vast of withering chill appeared,
And, squatted 'midst a cloud of dreams that flit
For ever round, Tavène, the sister weird;
Her skinny hand a bent of brome-grass held,
Which, as in deepest woe, the sybil spelled.

28.

"Poor twig of kindly working herb," she cried,
"Whom man, miscalling 'Devil's Wheat,' hath cursed,
Though Heaven's great judgments in thy sap reside;"
Mirelle salutes her, as her wild words burst,
Full of the load that would her aid invoke;
The haggard crone, her head unraising, spoke:

29.

"All's known to me." Again, with croning voice,
Her grass she spoke—"Poor floweret, ill accused,
Whose leaves and stems the browsing flocks rejoice
With dainty feast; and when their hoofs have bruised
Thy life, with tenfold verdure sprouts it forth,
To gem the south, to imparadise the north."

30.

This said, she ceased. Within a snail's coiled shell
Glimmered a feeble lamp with lurid gleam,
Waking the obscene horrors of the cell.
A raven foul was perched on forkèd beam,
A milk-white hen sat roosting at his side,
And pendant to the wall a sieve was tied.

31.

"Whoe'er ye be, what reck I?" starting cries
The hag as drunken, "Faith her way pursues
Blindfold, and Charity with bounden eyes,
Yet the strait track will neither pilgrim lose;
Weenst thou of Faith, young weaver of Valbrecque?"
"In sooth do I." "Then follow in my wake."

32.

With speed of she-wolf, that with grisly tail
  Lashes its flanks, the sybil swiftly leaps
Down a deep crevice; horror-awed Mirelle
  And Vincent follow to her Stygian deeps;
Before her echo through the ghostly den
The flap of raven, and the cluck of hen.

33.

"Descend apace; the hour impatient calls
  That we the mystic mandragore gird on." 6
Quick they obey, each locked to other crawls,
  Rough task, to where her words imperious drone;
Here in a cave that into night extends
The infernal gully hideously ends.

34.

"Lo! the blest plant," she signalled with a nod,
  "Of Nostradamus, my great lord and king;
The golden branch of Joseph, and the rod
  Of Moses!" and in act of worshipping,
With trembling hands her chaplet she unbound,
And of her magic herb the buddings crowned.

35.

Then rose and cried, "The hour, the hour is full,
That we the mystic mandragore gird on."
From the cleft rock her hands three branches pull,
That their three brows as crowns she sets upon;
"Forward, aye forward," cries and plunges deep,
Yet more impassioned in her hell-like keep.

36.

Before her, gathering and reflecting light
From their coiled backs, a troop of snails careered;
"Children, all regions exquisite and bright
Are but through woeful purgatory neared;
But courage;" and she gibbered, "aie, aie, aie,
In vain shall us the Sabbath terrify."

37.

Ere yet she ceased, a blast lashed painfully
Their eyes, and threw their laboured breathings back;
"Kneel we;" and lo, the wispy jubilee
In number as a hailstone heap, a pack
Of elves, the spawn of fog and fatuous light
Shrieked through the crypts, and woke their lazy night.

38.

Around the temples of the mortal three
A heavy sweat incontinently clings,
Engendered of the icy agony,
The chilly flappings of the phantom's wings.
"Go!" screams Tavène, "and beat the shades afar;
Off, harvest blasters, or prepare your war.

39.

"Ye villain dolts and braggarts, who our spells
Adjure, and then with railing words blaspheme;
Ye scoffing almsmen of our miracles,
The leech will health with poison drugs redeem;
Or who our magic pleasure hath withstood,
That pregnant ill shall generate the good?

40.

"For we are sovereign spirits, from whose eye
No subtlest thing is hid on heaven or earth,
And where the vulgar should a stone descry,
A scourge, disease, or ill of human birth,
Our eye a self-afflicting essence sees,
Like yeast of new wine working in the lees.

41.

"Pierce but the cask, forth spurts the boiling jet;
Find, an thou canst, the key of Solomon;
In its own tongue call on the rock, and straight
The mountain at thy word will topple down."
Still down uncounted caves they sink or wind,
At every depth a deeper yet to find.

42.

Then a thin voice, as linnet's small appeal,
Arrests them: "Beldame Tavène, cast a wink;
My old aunt Joan doth grind her spinning wheel,
Nor ceases day nor night its creaky clink;
Her skeins of wool she dreams are bulging full,
But 'tis with straw she labours, not with wool.

43.

"Yea, yea, the hag her spinning wheel doth grind;"
And screams, half laughter, gibbered through the air,
Like whinnying foal athirst his dam to find.
"What voice," cried Mirelle, trembling, "do I hear,
That speaks, then laughs, and intermittent sings?"
"Ha! ha!" anew her demon chuckle rings.

44.

Pipes the child voice: "What beauty's here below?
Allow me, sweet, thy kerchief to uplift;
Nay, let me lift it, pretty one, and know
If filberts or pomegranates swell thy shift."
The girl had shrieked, as back she crouched her breast,
But mustered silence at Tavène's behest.

45.

"Fear not, 'tis but a sprite of frolic sort,
That but wild quips can incubate and hatch,
The brainless bantling of the Imp of Sport;
Will sweep thy kitchen, if his vein thou catch,
Will gar thine hens a triple birth emit,
Inflame thy wine with gust, or turn thy spit.

46.

"If a quirk nip him, then to good farewell;
He'll cast the salt in handfulls in thy pot.
Thy fire to life no bellows will compel;
Would'st bear a lamp to bed, he wills it not;
Or would'st at vespers at St. Trophime pray,7
Thy Sunday robe he'll fade, or filch away."

47.

"Cease, cease, old crone, thou jabbering beldame, cease,"
The imp of mischief to Tavène replied;
"Hear'st not thy creaking pulley lacketh grease?
True, thou dried olive, when the maids abide
In sleep, I draw the coverlet, and betray
Their naked plumpness; how they crouch and pray!

48.

"See their two coppels palpitating rise,
And then with gentle respirance retreat;
I've seen"—but here the urchin gleets and flies,
Nor more enchantments in the crypts they meet;
Nought breaks the silence, fellow to the tomb,
But drip of water, droning through the gloom,

49.

That from the vault with measured ooze descends
Upon the crystalline and plashy floor;
But see, in boundless night where distance ends,
On ledge of rock a figure tall and hoar;
With hand on hip she rises, stern, erect,
Stands Vincent fixed, with stony sweat beflecked.

50.

And if some friendly precipice had yawned,
With frighted plunge Mirelle had safety sought;
"Lank monster," cries Tavène, "thou caitiff scorned,
With what grim ill are those head-rockings fraught,
That mock the storm-swung poplar? Rags of man,"
She spoke the two (death through their marrow ran),

51.

"Know ye not the Lavandière, whose throne
Is on Ventour, her birthright eminence?
A seeming sheet of cloud her form is known
To men below, but quick ye shepherds, hence,
And drive your stragglers home; for lo! for bane
In wrath Lavandière piles her hoards of rain.

52.

"And when the mischief worketh to her will,
Flails she, with arms contorted, to and fro,
The yeasty heap, and mocks with cruel skill
The rain's slant torrent and the lightning's glow;
Pale sailors jerked o'er mountain waves implore
Our Lady's succour for their souls and prore.

53.

"The frightened rustic stallward goads his herds;"
But now around strange tumults roar and ding,
Break off her speeeh, and backward fling her words,
The mewl of cats, the latches clattering,
With many a whining and half-muttered sound,
And such as only devils could expound.

54.

"Down, down, who thus upon the cauldron drums?"
And rending shrieks, and howls, and gibing roars,
With cries obscene screech round, and wail that comes
From dying mother whom her infant gores,
With mocking yawns, and moody qualms and groans,
The screams of furies, and convulsive moans.

55.

"Your hands stretch forth, and yield them to my hold,
And the charmed crowns that gird your brows, beware,
They 'scape you not." Then 'twixt their legs there rolled
As 'twere a herd of swine that shook the air,
With snort, and bark and yell, with grunt and low.
When nature slumbers 'neath her shroud of snow,

56.

Breezy and bright the night, the fowlers flare
Their torches 'long the rivulet, and shake
The choughs and sparrows in their might repair,
The air-rocked sleepers, terribly awake,
With burst of furnace blast, in mad turmoil
Whirl round in flocks, and plunge them in the toil.

57.

Thus would the witch the unclean exorcise;
"Bestrew ye locusts, evil-lived and foul,
Go, bear my curses to your furthest sties;"
And as the impure monsters scampering howl,
She signs and circles in the darkness threw
From her charmed sieve, and lines of scarlet clew.

58.

"Squat in your holes, ye artisans of ill;
What stirs you? Sure the stings that gall your hides
With furies' chastisements proclaim that still
The red sun scoriates the Alpine sides;
Go, hang you on some gibbet of the rock,
The day's too young for bats abroad to flock."

59.

On every side they vanish, and their sound
Dwindles to silence. "Know ye," says Tavène,
To the young lovers, "Here's the trysting ground
Of phantoms manifold, on fallow plain
So long as day the tempting manna sheds,
But soon as night her pall funereal spreads,

60.

"When come the days that La Vieille revolts
With scoffs at vengeful February's spite,
In blasted church chained up, with triple bolts,
Sleep not, ye women, though your brows invite
The cushioned kneelstool, lest across the gloom
Arise the traitor stones that sealed the tomb,

61.

"The unbidden tapers kindle into day,
While in their cerements bound, the drowsy dead
In ghastly order bend their knees to pray,
And by wan priest are mass and gospel read;
Each bell self-rocked its rusted office plies,
Tolls iron tears, and vibrates into sighs.

62.

"Question the fearful night-sprites if I lie;
When (winter come) from steeple they descend,
And in the church they suck the lamp's life dry,
Ask if 'midst all those dingy rites who tend,
They can one living celebrant define,
Save him who in the chalice pours the wine.

63.

"And when La Vieille her resentment whets [8]
And racks the land for February's wrong,
Early, ye shepherds, close your foldage gates,
Lest into pillared stone seven years along
The lea your flocks, and you her sorceries chill;
The Grot of Fays hath loosed its swarms for ill.

64.

"And herd in Cray fourfooted or on wing
All who with oath the covenant have sealed;
Wizards from Farigoule are gathering [9]
With ghouls from Fanfargoule through beck and field [10]
And 'midst the thyme they'd drink from golden bowl
And circle round in goblin farandole. [11]

65.

"And e'en the stunted oaks the measure join,
Trembling, La Garamaude Le Gripet bides;
'Out on thee, trull, misborn of devil's loin;
'Go, gripe thy carrion, Gripet,' so she chides;
'Claw out its entrails,' see, they flit away,
Now reel like drunken swine again to day.

66.

"But there below, behold who slinks from sight,
Half run, half crawl, among the thistle spears,
Like laden burglar stooping in his flight,
'Tis Bambarouche, fell nurse of mother's tears,
Her hands with claws, her head with horns equipped,
Poor screaming infants bears she off and stripped.

67.

"See ye there Nightmare? Down the chimney cracks
Stealthy he droops upon the dewy breast
Of sorry mortals sleeping on their backs,
Soundless he squats him on their tortured rest;
On mind like tower he squats, the heart he wrings
With haggered dreams and gaunt imaginings.

68.

"Hear ye the portals from their hinges rent?
The Escarinches the unhappy country waste;
Marmal, Barban, they joy to circumvent;
The Dracs with breath of salamander haste,
From far Cevennes in whirling troops, and flies
The farm's rough roofage rattling to the skies.

69.

"What din! O moon, say what conjunction dire
Thus angers thee so red and large to pounce
On fated Baux; thou silly moon, the ire
Beware of yonder yapping dog; if once
He seize thee, like a cake he'll gulp thee whole;
The guardian there's the watch-dog of Cambol.

70.

"But what thus twists and gnarls the oaks? But, lo,
They're wrapped up like to crozier mocking ferns;
St. Elmo's fires whirl round, and dance, and throw
A crumpled flame that side and earthward burns;
Bells shake the air, and hoofs the flinty sward,
'Tis the mad gallop of Castillon's lord."

71.

Gasping and choking, spent in words and speech,
The enchantress stopped—not long she tarried thus;
"Quick as I bid o'er ears and eyes of each
Your apron throw—the Black Lamb summons us."
"What lamb," asked Vincent, "bleats so gently here?"
She answers, "Quick in act, be deaf in ear."

72.

"Woe to the wretch who stumbles! Not the track [12]
Of Sambuque threats such perils as Cornu;
The sound ye heard e'en now comes softlier back,
The appealing bleat that would the bosom sue
And down the fell descent your footsteps lead.
To those false Christians who the tempter heed;

73.

"He calls up Herod's empire, and the gold
Of Judas, and authenticates the grave
Where hid the Turks the Golden Goat of old;
Life long they milk her, 'nough to drink and save,
But when death rattles, ere the lips are numb,
Quick let them call the blest Viaticum.

74.

"The sable brute with storms of blows replies;
Howbeit in this our gross unrighteous age,
When Vice ordains, and Avarice complies,
How many souls athirst and hungered rage
For filthy gain, and on its bondage gloat,
And burn their incense to the Golden Goat."

75.

Then thrice the clucking of the demon hen
Startled the gloom, and thus the enchantress said:
"The thirteenth cavern lies before you, when
The end of ends at length your steps will tread;"
'Neath a black chimney shaft of monstrous girth
Seven black cats squatting basked them on the hearth,

76.

And in the centre of the grizzly ring,
An iron cauldron from a pot-hook hung;
Two dragons, firebrand-shaped, were vomiting
Jets of blue flame, that 'neath the pot they flung,
From furnace jaws. "This fuel 'tis whereon
Your broth you boil, grandmother?" "Yea, my son.

77.

"When did the crackling faggot burn like these,
The heart and substance of the wild vine stock?"
"The vine! but sure thou deal'st in pleasantries,"
Said Vincent, "Haste we, here nought tempts to mock."
In the mid space a polished table stood,
Of porphyry of giant magnitude.

78.

A thousand pillars, ranged in files, and white,
Clear as on sparkling eaves the icy wreath,
Rayed from this centre stretched in ranks of light
Where oaks high up drilled down their roots beneath,
And where the mamelons their bases found,
Huge galleries by fairies hollowed round.

79.

Great plinths, majestic porticoes sustain
Some dimly seen, some duskily obscure,
Temple and palace, peristile and fane,
Not Babylon could vaunt such portraiture
Of chiselled life, nor Corinth could out-do
What here a fairy with a breath could strew.

80.

There roam the fairies like to quivering rays
In the leafed silence of the calm Chartreuse,
With knightly lovers lured in long gone days
By magic arts their envied state to lose;
Soft lives of love they lead, but spare we those,
Who shroud in night what shame would not expose.

81.

First throws the priest-enchantress o'er her head,
Then her bare arms abases to the ground;
Like Laurence Martyr on his torture bed,
Stretched on the slab of porphyry, unbound,
Young Vincent lies—his anguish unexpressed
Save by the pleading wound that stars his chest.

82.

To agony of prophet frenzy fired
By the great spirit labouring in her soul,
Her form expanded, big with words inspired
Her bursting throat, deep down the seething bowl,
That bubbles gross, the ladle casts Tavène,
The cats around their mystic ring maintain.

83.

With her left hand, in reverential awe,
With the warm pottage Vincent's heart she calmed,
And as into vacuity she saw,
The cruel wound she comforted and charmed;
"The Lord is born—the Lord hath died for men!"
Murmured she low, "The Lord is risen again."

84.

"Yea, He shall rise!" as tigress in the wood,
Her chase fulfilled, and furious to slay,
Lengthens her paw to purple with its blood
The tawny flank and dappled of her prey,
So with her foot three times the hag impressed
The holy symbol on his panting breast.

85.

And from her lips in wild unordered strain
Her words broke out and hurtled at the gate
Of our hereafter: "Yea! He shall rise again,
I well believe—I watch Him desolate,
Below 'mid flints and brambles climb the hill,
While bloody sweat-drops from His brow distil.

86.

"And 'mid the stones and brambles up the brow
All love He climbeth, tottering 'neath His cross.
Where with thy veil, Veronica, art thou?
Noble Cyrenian, stings thee no remorse
That thus He stumbles? with your plaintive hair,
Ye weeping Maries, not e'en ye are there.

87.

"And rich and poor regard Him from the plain,
Climbing through dust and darkness, as they ask,
'Who goeth there, His shoulder galled with pain
Of that great beam, nor faltereth in His task?'
Ye seed of Cain, souls waxed dim-eyed and gross,
Ye look on Him who beareth thus your cross,

88.

"As on the dog that scuffles down the street
Chased by his master's stone—ye tribe of Jews,
That bite the hand that giveth you to eat,
And bowing down lick that whose scourges bruise
Your spine and marrow, forward to presume
The horrors gathering for your speedy doom.

89.

"All that is stone shall crumble into dust;
The bitter ashes of the blasted ears
And shrivelled pulse your hunger shall disgust;
What hosts of swords, and phalanxes of spears!
O'er the heaped slain the torrent and the rill
Exulting bound! Thou, stormy sea, be still!

90.

"Ah! the old boat of Peter on the rocks
Drives hard and flies like brittle sherds, but see,
The fisher-chief the rebel billow mocks,
Now in new bark and beautiful and free
From shoal and reef, stems Rhone's rejoicing tide,
The Cross that shades the helm his pilot guide.

91.

"O bow celestial compassing all space,
Blessed bond of mercy faithfully divine,
New earth I see where olive maidens trace,
'Neath lavish boughs and sun of glorious shine,
Their farandole; the barley reapers bask,
Stretched on their sheaves, and sup the mid-day flask.

92.

"And, by such clouds of witnesses confessed,
God in His holy temple is adored;"
The witch then showed a path—its end compressed
By distance to a light like edge of sword,
So keen its fineness—forth the lovers went,
In haste, flush-cheeked, their heads with horror bent.

93.

Thus through the caverns of the grot of Corde [15]
Into the day emerged the beauteous pair;
As in a dream they saw Mount Majour, lord
Of abbeys in their ruin and despair,
With rough grey horror clothe the rocks around;
They soft embraced, and trod the sunlit ground.

NOTES ON CANTO VI.

Note 1, stanza 3, line 4.

"St. Martin's bell, or that of Maussane tolled." St. Martin and Maussane are villages in La Crau.

Note 2, stanza 9, line 4.

"Crousillat too, whose name Touloubre hath clad." La Touloubre, a small river, which runs into the Etang de Berre, after traversing the territory of Salon, the country of the poet Crousillat.

Note 3, stanza 9, line 6.

"To Nostradamus who the stars could read." Nostradamus, the gloomy astrologer. Michel de Notre-dame was born at St. Remy in 1503, and died at Salon in 1556. He practised medicine with great success under the last Valois. He devoted himself to mathematics and astrology, and published, in 1557, under the title of "Centuries," the famous prophecies which have rendered his name celebrated. Charles IX. appointed him his physician, and loaded him with honours. [He discovered, or was supposed to have discovered, a remedy for the plague, consisting of a powder, of which he has given the formula in his treatise *Des Faras*.

Nostradamus assumed the character of a divinely-inspired prophet, and published his predictions. He was in consequence looked upon by some as an impostor, and by others as either inspired by God or in league with the Devil. His prophecies, numbering a thousand, he put into the form of quatrains. Considering their number, it is not wonderful if some of them appeared to find their fulfilment in subsequent events. One, foretelling the death of Charles I. of England, may be considered of sufficient interest to warrant its insertion here:—

"Gand et Bruxelles marcheront contre Anvers;
Sénat de Londres mettront à mort leur roi;
Le sel et le vin lui seront à l'envers;
Pour eux avoir le règne en desarroi."

The following couplet was by Todelle, a contemporary, and not an admirer:—

"*Nostra damus cum falsa damus, nam fallere nostrum est,*
Et cum falsa damus, nil nisi nostra damus."]

Note 4, stanza 16, line 6.

"'Bring agriotat,' cried Raymond, 'and allay
His thirst.'"

Agriotat, a liquor composed of brandy and sugar, in which a particular kind of cherry is steeped.

Note 5, stanza 21, line 6.

"'Bear him to the Grot of Fays.'" Trou de fées. The author says: I am glad to quote my friend Jules Canonge, for he has written a happy description of the greater part of the scenes of this poem.

"At the bottom of a gorge, well named Enfer, I descended into the Fairies' Grotto; but in place of the graceful phantoms with which my imagination had peopled it, I found nothing but vaults under which I had to crawl, heaps of stones, bats, and deep dark chasms. I have just said that this gorge was well named Enfer—nowhere indeed have I ever seen rocks tortured into such strange shapes; they rise up, they sink down, they stretch out in the open space into great entablatures, and gardens in the air, supporting a lank vegetation: they split themselves into defiles like that block of the Pyrenees which was cleft by the sword of Roland."

On comparing the description of Hell by Dante with this disordered, cyclopean, and fantastic landscape, one becomes convinced of one fact, namely, that the great Florentine poet, who travelled in our country, and even dwelt some time at Arles, visited the town of Les Baux, sat on the escarpments of the valley of Hell, and, struck with this grand desolation, conceived, in the midst of this convulsion of rocks, the notion and gloomy character of his Inferno. Everything leads to this idea—the very name of the gorge itself, its form of an amphitheatre, which is that given by Dante to Hell, the huge detached rocks which form its tiers of seats,

"In su l'estremità d'un' alta ripa,
Che facevan gran pietre rotte in cerchio,"

and also the name of these very escarpments, baus, Italianised by the poet balzo, and bestowed by him on the escarpments of his melancholy cavern.

Note 6, stanza 33, line 2.

"The mystic mandragore." ["Atropa Mandragora, or Mandrake, is a plant of the same genus as *Atropa Belladonna* or Deadly Nightshade, but still more poisonous and dangerous. It is found in many parts of the south of Europe, and is common in the Grecian islands. Its root is a large dark-coloured fleshy mass, often divided into two or three forks, which have been fancied to resemble a human body; this circumstance and its well-known poisonous qualities gave it,

in the days of popular ignorance and credulity, the reputation of being endowed with animal feelings. The roots were said to shriek when torn from the earth, and it was accounted dangerous to disturb them. The smell of the whole plant is very fetid." (*English Cyclopædia.*)]

Note 7, stanza 46, line 5.

"Or would'st at vespers at St. Trophime pray." St. Trophimus, the Cathedral of Arles, built in the Seventh Century by the Archbishop St. Virgil. Frederick Barbarossa was consecrated emperor there in 1178.

Note 8, stanza 63, line 1.

"And when La Vieille her resentment whets." Vers le temps où la vieille irritée—lance à Fevrier sa ruade. The peasants of the south remark that the last three days of February, and the first three of March, almost always bring a return of cold, and their poetic imagination thus explains the fact.

An old woman was once tending her sheep. It was at the end of February, which that year had not been severe. The old woman believing she had escaped the winter, allowed herself to taunt February in the following manner:—

"Adieu Fevrier! avec ta gelée,
Tu ne m'ai fait ni peau, ni pelée."

The raillery of the old woman enrages February, who sets out in search of March. "March, do me a service." "Two, if need be," answers her obliging neighbour. "Send me three days, and with three which I have left I will flay her alive" (lui ferai peaux et pelée). The weather immediately became dreadful; the hoarfrost killed all the grass; all the sheep of la Vieille died; and la Vieille, according to the peasants "regimbait" (regnignavo, Provençal). From that time this stormy period bears the name of Reguignado de la Vieio—Ruade de la Vieille. (See note 10, canto vii., stanza 43).

[*Regimber* means literally to kick like a horse, *ruade*, the kicking of a horse.]

Note 9, stanza 64, line 3.

"Wizards from Farigoule are gathering." The grotto of Farigoule, a deep cavern of the Luberon on the side of Murs (Vaucluse).

Note 10, stanza 64, line 4.

"With ghouls from Fanfargoule through beck and field." Fanfarigoule, a valley of La Crau on the side of Istre (Bouches-du-Rhone).

Note 11, stanza 64, line 6.

"And circle round in goblin farandole." (See note 12, canto vii., stanza 78.)

Note 12, stanza 72, line 1.

"Not the track
Of Sambuque threats such perils as Cornu."

Le pas de Sambuque, a defile dreaded by travellers in the mountains of La Sambuque to the east of Aix.

Note 13, stanza 93, line 1.

"Thus through the caverns of the grot of Corde." Corde—"To the east of Arles rise two hills, which formerly must have formed but one, but they are now separated by a marsh. On the bare, rocky and flat summit of the least high, the Celts a long time ago made, in the form of a sword, an excavation covered by gigantic blocks. The Saracens are said to have encamped in this hill; and, in memory of Cordova, they gave it the name of Corde, which it still bears. It is enlivened and poetised by various reminiscences; at one time it is la Couleuvre fée, the Provençal Melusina: it is especially the Golden Goat, which discovers hidden treasures, but renders incurably sad, in the midst of their riches, those who do not merit them. The other and larger hill bears the almost Roman name of Mont Majour." (Jules Canonge, *Illustration*, 29th of May, 1852.)

On this hill are the gigantic ruins of the celebrated Abbey of Mont Majour. As regards the grotto of Corde, it is called also Trau di Fado, like the grotto of Les Baux, and, according to popular belief, these two grottoes communicate with each other.

CANTO VII.

THE OLD MEN.

The old basket-maker and his son, seated before the door of their cabin, are weaving a basket—Landscape of the banks of the Rhone—Vincent urges his father to go and ask the hand of Mirelle—The old man's refusal and remonstrance—Vincenette, Vincent's sister, tries to bend Master Ambrose, and relates the history of Silvestre and Alice—Departure of Master Ambrose for the Cornel Croft—Arrival and repast of the Harvesters—Master Raymond—The Ploughing—Ambrose' recital and Raymond's answer—The Christmas table—Mirelle confesses her love for the basket weaver's son—Anger, imprecations, and refusal of her parents—Indignation of Master Ambrose—Napoleon aud his great wars—Fury of Master Raymond—The soldier ploughman—Farandole of the harvesters round the bonfire of St. John.

I.

"I TELL thee, father, and again I tell,
I'm mad for love of her—think'st thou I jest?"
Thus as his eyes old Ambrose' thoughts would spell,
And scan his face, his cause young Vincent pressed,
The lofty poplars to the mistral bowed,[1]
As thus he roared his passion long and loud.

2.

'Fore his Rhone hut, which scarce twin nuts would hold,
Sat on a fallen stump the aged man,
And stripped his osiers, shielded from the cold;
Seated beneath him Vincent's fingers ran
Through the bleached rods and aptly interlaced
To basket ware with ne'er repenting haste.

3.

Rhone into madness by the tempest lashed,
His waves, like herded cows that roar and bound
'Fore cruel gadfly, to the ocean dashed;
But to one spot which osiers compassed round
With shade and shield, an azure pool had crept,
Till all becalmed its tranquil waters slept.

4.

Along the shoaly banks the beaver gnawed,
Unsavoury meat, the willow's bitter rind;
Below, beyond the sheltered crystal, warred
The tawny otters 'gainst the finny kind:
Who looked might see them the blue depths assail
And seize their captives through their silver mail.

5.

Along the banks the cradling breezes swung
In measured sweep the willow-warbler's nest,[2]
A ball of snow, on rush or osier hung,
Of tissue soft and fine as maiden's vest,
Of eider that the subtle builders pull
From the white poplar when its bloom is full.

6.

With auburn hair, and skin of dainty cate,[3]
A maiden blithe upon a fig tree spread
A net wide meshed, with moisture saturate;
Her form familiar no more terror shed
O'er birds and tribes to water haunts inclined,
Than rush scarce quivering in the gentlest wind.

7.

Poor child! old Ambrose' well loved Vincenette,
Her rustic ear no barbarous hand had drilled;
Blue were her eyes as sloe scarce ripened yet,
Her bosom marked her girlhood unfulfilled:
She was like caper blossom that old Rhone,
Enamoured, sprinkles as he hurries on.

8.

With beard that clothed his loins illkempt and grey,
Old Ambrose thus his chafing son addressed:
"Lackbrain, for such thy wit thy words betray,
Which grant thy tongue and my sad ear no rest;"
"Father, the ass his halter will but slip
When some choice meadow captivates his lip!

9.

"But why this heap of words? the truth you know;
Went she to Arles, her mates in sex and days
Would hide and weep—the mould that skilled her so
Was broken straight—would she not have thy praise
If told she vowed to love none else but me?"
"Ask, fool, of wealth and want, they'll answer thee."

10.

"But to the Cornel Croft, my father, go
With life-bound speed, and all the case expound;
Her parents warn, their wisdom were to know
Man's virtue, not his misery to sound:
Say that mine hands their vines can dig and prune,
And work their stony moors to tilth and boon.

11.

"Say their six yoke of steers I'll speed so straight,
A double breadth of double depth they'll plough;
Say I'm a man the old to venerate,
And if our hearts are rent we're dead from now,
For both an instant common grave will seek."
Said Ambrose, "Who are young, as young will speak.

12.

"The White Hen's egg hath addled sure thy brain,4
Or for the linnet on the bough thou'lt sigh,
To make it thine, and think'st with sugar'd grain
To lure it down, and coo till ye shall die;
Think not 'twill perch upon the hand of one
Who's but a beggar and a simpleton."

13.

"Ah! to be poor it is a sorry plight!"
Cried Vincent, maddening as his hair he rent;
"The great Creator who made all things right,
Can He give life, and kill that life's content,
And yet be righteous? Wherefore are we poor?
Why from the vineyard rich with luscious store

14.

"Suck some the grapes, while others toil-bent munch
The skins or stones?" His arms old Ambrose raised,
And his son stern rebuked; "Weave, weave thy bunch
Of withes, and clear thy brain ere it be crazed:
When did the sheaf the reaper learn to chide,
Or when to God hath snake or worm replied:—

15.

"'Stern Father, why as planet blaze I not?'
Hath the ox asked, 'The herdsman why not I?'
Some take the wheat, the husk is all my lot;
Nay, dark or bright, my son, that path we'll try
To walk resigned whereto God gives us strength;
Are thy five fingers uniform in length?

16.

"As unrepining lizard be thy days;
Live in thy bare allotted chink in peace;
Drink of his sunpour, and give God the praise."
"Sister and God I love, but ne'er can cease
To love her more—deny her, I expire,
And thou, my father, art a sonless sire."

17.

He fled, and murmuring 'long the river ran,
His grief to banish and his rage exhale;
When Vincenette in tears the basketman
Approached, and spake, "Good father, list my tale,
Ere thou cast down my brother. On the farm
Where erst I served, a labourer worked as warm

18.

"In love for Alice, 'twas our master's child,
Silvestre his name, whom passion so o'erpowered,
That he for work as wolf for food was wild;
His hands were quickened, thrifty, early-houred,
And willing—thus his master slept content:
One morn—oh! listen to my tale's event!—

19.

"One morn the mistress heard Silvestre expound
By stealth to Alice all his love's strong growth;
At dinner, when the hinds had ranged them round
The table, came the master, fired and wroth
His eyes, 'Begone, thou traitor,' roared his rage;
'I've seen thy treachery—here—take thy wage!'

20.

"So the good servant wandered forth; we gazed
Into each other's faces in dismay,
So much each friend his cruel lot amazed;
Three weeks we watched him o'er the fallows stray,
And round the homestead miserably prowl;
Wan was his cheek, his garments torn and foul:

21.

"Now would he throw him down, now madly run
Then 'neath the fence with voice of she-bear roar
The name of Alice, and the darkness stun:
A vengeful fire soon scaled the corners four
Of the wheat rick; its cinders bleached the ground;
And, father, from the well they drew one drowned."

22.

Here Master Ambrose murmured as he rose,
"Small children breed small troubles, great the grown;"
He went above, drew on his sturdy hose,
Made long ago by no hand save his own,
Then his stout shoes nail-studded firmly tied,
Donned his red cap, and off to Cray he hied.

23.

It was the season of the ripened wheat;
To wit, it was the eve of Holy John,
'Long paths and hedges through the land you meet
Large troops of mountain reapers pressing on,
Sun brown their cheeks, dust blanched their rough attire,
Our fields to harvest for their lusty hire.

24.

Their sickles in their shoulder belts they bear
In fig-tree sheathes—they're banded two and two;
A female binder gladdens every pair;
A galoubet and tambourine with new
Bright ribands garnished all the carts engay,
Where rest the old men weary of the way.

25.

And as they pass the spiky breadths along,
Which 'neath the wind a billowed sea extend,
"Great God! what wheats!"—thus runs their harvest song;
"What stubborn swaths will make our sickles bend;
See how the masses curtsey to the breeze,
To rise again with freshened energies."

26.

'Twas thus the merry troop when Ambrose met.
"Are all your wheats as ripe throughout Provence
As these, old friend?" a youth exclaimed; "As yet
The red sorts are of slower prominence,"
He said, "but let cool winds endure, in vain
Ye'll search for sickles to confront the grain.

27.

"Noted ye not at Christmas-tide, young friends,
How the three candles matched the stars in light?
Bethink what blessing this on corn portends."
"God grant you right, good father, and requite
Your faith with garners bursting with their store."
Thus 'midst the willows trudging, chatted o'er

28.

Their hopes, the basket-man and mountaineers;
They too he finds are making for the Croft,
Which 'midst its lofty cornels now appears.
Here Master Raymond strolled his hour, and oft
The crops examined where the mistral warred,
And counted what it missed and what it marred.

29.

With rapid strides the ear-spiked plain he paced,
From north to south the golden breadths across,
The ruddy fruits reproving him to haste,
"Our hour is here—see how we bow and toss,
And shed our bloom and plumpness 'neath the wind,
On thy left hand thy reeden gauntlet bind." 7

30.

Others upbraid: "E'en now the mustered ants
Our pillars scale, and forage in our ears;
The sappy grain they crop for winter wants;
Nor yet the song of whetted sickle nears."
'Long the tree rows the farmer cast his glance,
And viewed rejoiced the reaper tribe advance.

31.

The good man seen, the ready swarm unsheathed,
And their broad sickles brandished in the sun,
Till every head a ring of flame enwreathed;
That due salute their festival forerun,
Raymond, the distance to his voice adeemed,
The rustic troop addressed that forward streamed:

32.

"Welcome, right welcome, your brave band," he cried;
"The God of harvests grants you to my need;"
And now to near the chief the maidens vied; [speed:
"Thou'lt give thine hand," they said, "and take God
May every bounty crown thy blessed estate;
What shocks this year to burst thy garners wait!"

33.

"Judge not, my pretty friends, from what looks fair;
When through the bushel all the barn hath passed,
The yield and promise justly we compare;
Years have I known of expectation vast,
Ten bushels have they promised to the rood,
And given but three—yet is the Giver good."

34.

And smiling round each eager hand he pressed;
And next in friendly chat with Ambrose fell;
Then as they sauntered to the house addressed
(Though scarce yet reached the avenue) Mirelle:
"Quick, quick, my child, the chicory prepare,
And draw the choicest of the wine nor spare."

35.

From her full apron quick the board was decked;
At one end sat him down the handsome chief,
Like did the willing guests. The bread hard baked
To crust that crackled 'twixt the teeth, in brief
By their strong jaws to pulpy crumb was brayed;
Nor lacked the salsify's abundant aid.

36.

The table shone its welcome, washed till planed
As smooth as oak-stalk, and as pure of spot;
Cachat that all its pungent fame maintained, [8]
The racy garlic, aubergines, fresh, hot, [9]
And hissing, spiced with rare concoctive power,
And silver onions a countless shower.

37.

Raymond, the ever chief at board or field,
Oft as the flagon landed at his side,
Convivial rose, and for a toast appealed:
"When o'er a stony soil the scythe is plied,
Its edge we moisten, that it keener pass;"
Each hind in turn held forth his ample glass.

38.

"Speed to the moistened scythe." The bulky stoup
With gurgling twang gave forth its ruby stream,
To smoothe the rugged palates of the troop,
To whom thus Raymond oped the harvest theme:
"Good friends, your hunger foiled, your strength regained,
We'll speed to work as custom hath ordained:

39.

"Each to the copse go forth—his bosom fill
With sheaf of boughs; then all the booty mass.
Soon as the pile will work our pious will,
At eve, my lads, to solemn rites we'll pass,
St. John's great vigil waits our hearts' accord;
John, harvest saint, friend chosen of the Lord."

40.

Thus willed the good man; in the noble art
And science that the lord of lands must wield
To weight his orders, and strong rule impart,
And due allegiance force from man and field,
Black clods returning, for the ploughman's sweat,
The snow-mealed wheat, he ne'er his equal met.

41.

Sobriety and patience led his days;
True, toil and years had worked his back to bend;
Yet oft in threshing time, before the gaze
Of the vain lads, his master strength he'd lend,
On either palm would lift, with triumph gay,
Eight pecks of wheat, and bear them calm away.

42.

He would his labour from the moon forecast,
Her smiles and threats—he knew when she would stir
The sap to rise, and when 'twas risen blast;
If rings her disc should jag, or purple blur
Her sad wan face, the omen right was read;
The birds, or early mustiness in bread,

43.

The angry season of La Vache, the haze
That August vomits from miasmic dyke,
Mock bastard suns, St. Clare's ill dawning days,
And droughts and frosts unkindly and unlike,
Nay, e'en the subtle tread of smiling years,
For him were signs to point his hopes or fears.

44.

Oft have I seen him e'en on mellow land,
The sun propitious and the season fresh,
To one good plough six noble oxen band;
Grand sight, their muscle and related flesh;
The crumbling soil, expanding to the share,
Slowly disclosed its bosom to the air.

45.

Then his six mules, in health and beauty prime,
The arrowy furrow straight, unwavering drew;
And as they stepped in true adjusted time,
Seemed as if how they worked, and why they knew;
Each ear and eye intent on word or beck,
Each muzzle earthward turned, and arched each neck.

46.

His eye afield, calm marched the ploughman aft,
Between his lips his pleasant canzonet,
Nor swerved, though but his right hand held the shaft.
Then Master Raymond while the seed was set,
Like stately king, his orders cast around,
Nor monarch e'er more rapt obedience found.

47.

Yet still, with eyes that humbly sought the sky,
His thanks he breathed and reverent on his brow
Signed the redeeming Cross. Now gaily fly
The festive group to rend the fuel bough,
And stack the pile; quick-kindling rushes some,
While others bring the pine's dark umbrage home.

48.

But the two elders lingered at the board:
Old Ambrose 'gan his tale: "I come to crave,
O Raymond, counsel thou canst best afford.
A trouble haunts me with a tearful grave,
Helpless what path to choose, and when pursue,
Through this great maze of woe to strike a clue.

49.

"Thou knowest I have a son—till this sad hour
His marks of wisdom primed my soul to pride:
He sins who sees the grass nor lauds the shower;
But graceless flaws in brightest jewels hide;
What fierce convulsions tear young lambs; and deep
And dangerous waters most serenely sleep.

50.

"What think'st thou must the witless dreamer do?
His brain with love of one is all in flames,
Her tenants many as his pence are few.
'Have her I must, and will,' the dolt proclaims;
His love and madness rack me with despair.
I've warned the fool, but spoken to the air.

51.

"Vainly I've said, 'Wealth soars, while lack must sink.'
He answers, 'Seek her parents and propound
My vow to have her,—bid them wisely think
Man's virtue, not his misery to sound;
Tell them mine hands their vines can dig and prune,
And work their stony moors to tilth and boon;

52.

"'Say their six yoke of steers I'll speed so straight,
A double breadth of double depth they'll plough;
Say, I'm a man the old to venerate;
And if they rend our hearts, we're dead from now;
For both an instant common grave will seek.'
Now thou hast heard my grief, so Raymond speak;

53.

"Say, in this beggar's raiment shall I go
And sue the maiden, or slink back to find
A dying son?" "Bah!" Raymond cries, "be slow
To set thy sail before so poor a wind;
Go home, thy fears cast off, for by my troth,
And wisdom too, they'll die nor one nor both.

54.

"Friend, in thy strait and stead my course were clear;
Of such vain errands lay all thoughts aside;
Straight to thy son proceed, and say, my dear,
Preserve thy peace, for should it but betide,
Thy folly end in stirring up a storm,
A cudgel best will moralise reform!"

55.

Then Ambrose: "When the ass begins to bray,
We cease to throw the fodder at his feet,
But rather for his hide a stake purvey."
Thus Raymond: "Fathers fathers' due should meet,
And rule obeyed; sheep that their herd would lead,
The wolf's wide jaws will soon or later feed.

56.

"If in our time a son his sire had crossed,
God help us! but his death his meed had been;
Then saw we healthy houses, where a host
Of loving hearts kept age and virtue green,
Like the plane's branches laughing in the gale,
They had, 'tis true, their jars, those never fail.

57.

"Howbeit on Christmas night, beneath his tent
Star spangled grouped the patriarch around
His table all his jewels of descent;
As the bright board his age majestic crowned,
His furrowed hand aloft he raised to bless,
And in sweet blessing drown all bitterness."

58.

But the young maid by love all powerful sped,
Fire in her brains, and on her brow despair,
Exclaimed, "Then, father, thou wilt mourn me dead;
Me Vincent loves, and 'fore my God I swear,
And Heaven's great Queen, none else my soul shall know:"
And all sat mute, three effigies of woe.

59.

Long paused they thus, Jeanne Marie first was heard,
As from her chair with folded arms she rose:
"My daughter," stern she spoke, "the words that erred
From out thy lips our tarnished name disclose,
And point again the thorn whose bitter smart
So long thou'st driven to fester in our heart.

60.

"Didst thou not Alari that shepherd scorn,
Who many a thousand high-bred fleece can count;
And Veranet to wealth of horses born?
Nor could Elzéar cattle-lord surmount
Thy spurn: and, faith, a popinjay hath lured
Thy wits to quit a melon for a gourd. [12]

61.

"So get thee off! ask alms from door to door,
And with thy beggar round the country tramp;
Thou thine own riches art—seek chaste Belore,
And Roucane, gipsy, and with them encamp;
Or 'neath some arch that spans the unhealthy brook,
Squat on three flints your rancid pottage cook."

62.

Thus said she, and thus Raymond let her say
But as an air-fanned taper gleamed his eye,
And blinked, and from his shaggy brows and grey
The lightnings flashed, till helpless to defy
His mass of wrath, the sluice-gates yield and crash,
And all undammed abroad the waters dash.

63.

"Yea, she speaks well, thine outraged mother, go,
And leave the storm to settle in thy void;
Yet no, remain—for did mine anger throw
Clogs round thy legs, and iron hooks employed
To hold thy nose, as beast that needs the ring,
Straight on mine head should heaven its thunder bring!

64.

"And though with pining pale and wan I trace
Thy faded cheek dissolve and wane as snow,
That rains in spring-tide down the mountain's face;
Sure as yon hearth was made with warmth to glow,
As Rhone o'ercharged nor bank nor bound can tame,
And sure, once more, as yonder lamp is flame,

65.

"My word, guard well, thou never see'st him more."
And his huge hand upon the table boomed,
Shaking its vastness. As the dew drops pour
On water-plants, or when the blast hath doomed
The ripened bunch, and pearl by pearl are cast
The mellow grapes, so Mirelle's tears fell fast.

66.

"Who'll pledge me, Ambrose? be this day accursed!
Who, Master Ambrose?" stammered the old man;
"Thou hast not in thy beggar's hovel nursed
With thy foul soul, and fed this robber's plan?'
Thus scorned the other aged man betrays
The healthy honour of his stoutest days:

67.

"Hath God then fled!" he bounded up and cried;
"If low our lot, this day of me thou'lt learn
We bear high hearts—our poverty hath pride;
It ne'er took taint of vice, nor scorn should earn;
Twice twenty years of glory can I sum,
When cannon changed my music with the drum.

68.

"A fisher's gaff I scarce could handle when,
A cabin-boy, from Valabrègue I turned;
Lost on the ocean wilds, storm-tossed and then
Lost oft in calms, what distant realms I learned;
In Ind with Suffren every cross was mine,
And days as bitter as the ocean brine.

69.

"In our great wars a soldier's arms I bare,
And with our southern chief in daily fight
The world bestrode with him who sowed despair
From Spain to fastness of the Muscovite;
His distant drums made conscious nations quail
As wild pears rock before the autumn gale.

70.

"And in the horrors of the boarding race
And shipwreck anguish, spite his wealth and pride,
Methinks I've honours earned the rich might grace;
Yet to me, son of poverty's denied,
In mine own land an inch my staff to set,
For which I forty years gave blood and sweat.

71.

"Couched on the ground the hoar frost was our sheet,
The musty rations of a dog our bread;
Jealous of death for France we rushed to greet
The coming carnage; France forgets our stead,
Whose name we rescued." And, his censure passed,
O'er his bent back his cloak of serge he cast.

72.

"What think'st of Mont-de-Vergue or St. Pilon?" 13
His gruff upbraider to his plaint replied;
"I too have seen the bombs, and heard their song
Down Toulon's vale, at Arcola, beside
Our chief, the bridge saw scattered in the flood,
And Egypt's deserts drowned in living blood.

73.

"But from the war set free, we straight applied
The top long slothful soil to wake and stir,
Our aching bones oft felt their marrow dried;
Our will to work our sole chronometer,
Hastening the dawn afield we sprang to go,
And the moon found us doubled o'er the hoe.

74.

"The earth, men say, a generous mother is,
But nut-tree like so chary of her fruit,
Who beats well only makes her increase his:
If on this land thou'dst rood by rood compute
The clods mine hand to mellow tilth hath forced,
Thou'dst count the drops of sweat that o'er them coursed.

75.

"St. Anne of Apt! and I my tongue must tie,
Who worked liked satyr in the sweltering field,
And fed on husks to lay provision by,
That ceaseless toil unceasing thrift might yield;
And, honour earned, at length I must enrich
With my one child a beggar from a ditch.

76.

"Go, by God's thunder, from my presence go;
Thy hound keep thou, and I will keep my swan."
Such words of outrage from the rich man flow,
The other aged man, thus heeled upon,
Takes hat and staff, his ire two words content,
"Farewell—some day may scourge thee to repent.

77.

" And God, meanwhile, his angels charge to hale
The bark and golden cargo to its port!"
And forth he wandered while the day grew pale,
The mistral thunder-tongued to fury wrought
The flames that hurtled from the faggot pile;
The harvesters, in reckless joy the while,

78.

Cast high in air their heads erect and free,
And stirred it round with ceaseless capriole,
Stamping their feet to frantic minstrelsy,
They beat the measure of the farandole;
The roaring flames uplifted by the air
Cast o'er each murky face a ruddy glare.

79.

The sparks in whirling volleys vex the sky
With mad assault, great boles upon the pyre
Sink roaring down, wherewith, with slender cry,
The crackling faggots form fantastic choir,
Like chirping birds—as thou go'st by, the earth
Shakes, holy John, as mother at the birth.

80.

The vocal flames are resonant with joy;
The tambourine sustains its drowsy hum,
Unbroken as when tide-borne waves deploy,
And calmly strong far 'gainst the headlands drum,
What time the dancers labour-lacquered bare
Their blades, and as they flash them in the air,

81.

Thrice o'er the flames with vollied shouts they feign [16]
The Saints' Bravade—in rapture bound they o'er
The sylvan hęarth—great trusses of vervaine,
And mille-pertuis, a consecrated store,
With herbs of savour, cast they in the pyre,
And pray the blessing of the cleansing fire.

82.

Thrice on St. John each fervent spirit calls;
Glisten the hills, as from the abounding sky
A rain of stars through night unceasing falls;
The sportive breeze congenial bears on high
The glare of fire and incense clouds to where
The saint in purple twilight walks the air.

NOTES ON CANTO VII.

Note 1, stanza 1, line 5.

["The lofty poplars to the mistral bowed." The only great drawback to the beauty of the climate of Provence is the mistral, an icy wind from the north west, which blows with an immense force three, six, nine, or fifteen days, and sometimes, but rarely, for three weeks together. This wind is much so dreaded by the people of Provence, that they fear it as one of their direst calamities, as the following ancient proverb attests:—

"Le parlement, le mistral, la Durance,
Sont les trois fléaux de Provence."]

Note 2, stanza 5, line 2.

["In measured sweep the willow-warbler's nest." The bird intended by the author is designated under the generic name of *penduline*. It is probably the Fan-tail Warbler, to which I have given the name of Willow Warbler, which is thus described in Wood's *Natural History*.

"*Salicaria cisticola* (from *salix* a willow, and *cista* a dwelling). The Fan-tail Warbler is a most interesting little bird. The cradle, in which it lays its nest, is most ingeniously constructed, from the living reeds among which the bird loves to make its residence. As it is so minute a creature, it is unable to make use of the thick and sturdy stems, but employs the flat leaf blades, and the smaller grasses, in its architectural designs. Each leaf is pierced by the bill, drawn closely to another, and secured by a cotton thread passed through the perforation, and secured at each stitch by a knot elaborately tied. In this wonderfully constructed nest, the Fan-tail Warbler lays four or six eggs of a bluish flesh colour. The popular name of Fan-tail has been given to this bird on account of the peculiar shape of the expanded tail exhibited by the bird whenever it sets itself in motion. It is a lively little bird, popping in and out of the foliage in a very wren-like manner. When observed, it takes to its wings, and will fly to a considerable distance

before alighting. It is a native of the Mediterranean shores, and is found along the northern and eastern parts of Europe and the adjoining parts of Africa and Asia. At Gibraltar it is found in plenty. The colour of this pretty little bird is a warm chestnut brown, each feather being marked with a dark strip running down its centre. The under surface is white, with a brown wash, and the tail is brownish black, each feather being graduated. Each tail feather is tipped with white, presenting an agreeable contrast to the darker hues of the basal portions. The total length of this bird is about five inches.]

Note 3, stanza 6, line 1.

"With skin of dainty cate." Rousse comme une tortillade, a cake of the shape of a crown, made with pine paste, sugar, eggs, and aniseed.

Note 4, stanza 12, line 1.

"The White Hen's egg hath addled sure thy brain." C'est là l'œuf de la poule blanche – a proverbial expression, denoting something rare or precious for which any one has a great longing. The witches took a white hen to the crossways by moonlight, and invoked the devil with the cry, three times repeated, of "Per la vertu de ma poulo blanco." Juvenal, speaking of a fortunate man, says, "*Gallinæ filius albæ.*"

Note 5, stanza 23, line 4.

"Through the land you meet
Large troops of mountain reapers pressing on."

[As the spring draws near, nothing is talked of in all the public places, in all the markets, but the harvest. Each harvestman makes his preparations for departure; the most experienced settle the precise time, order the length of the journey, and decide upon the halting places; the young girls choose those whom they like best to bind up their sheaves.

At this period the villages from Grasse to Draguignan, as well as those of the sub-alpine mountains, become almost deserted. The peasants and unemployed workmen assemble on all sides. Immediately after hearing mass, the whole troop meets in the principal square, or before the church. As soon as they are collected, the youngest amongst them beats, without regard to time, and without ceasing, a small drum, such as children have for toys. Each harvestman has his little bundle in a bag, his scythe hung at his side, as also his gourd; a very long stick helps to make the march easier. These marching hordes spread themselves far and wide; those who compose them undertake not only harvest work, but also that of the vintage, and the picking of the olives, acorns and chestnuts. The first harvestmen begin with the plains of Napouli; they come to Frejus,

Ste. Maxime, Grimand; they then pass on to Brignolles and St. Maximin; next they go up to La Verdière, Rians, Greoux, Manosque; lastly they come down to the plains of Senas, arrive at Tarascon, and finish with Arles and Camargue. In this way these useful and laborious men earn during the summer, by severe labour, sufficient to keep themselves and their families during the winter. God seems to have allotted heat to the earth by sections, in order that they may find work in succession. If all the crops were ripe at once, they would rot on the ground, for want of hands to gather them in; and all the means offered to industrious poverty would be entirely exhausted in a very short time.

When night makes repose necessary, after taking a very light repast to sustain their strength, they throw themselves down pell-mell in the barns, the stables, or the public squares, and sleep side by side; rest, of which they stand in such need, is their only desire. Even fête days are not days of rest for the girls who accompany the harvest troops; they employ them in washing their clothes and those of their companions. It is impossible that this style of life should not occasionally lead to immorality, but generally good faith reigns amongst these poor people, and the mothers' confidence is rarely deceived.

These troops of harvestmen always produce on me the same impression. I could never see them without a sincere pleasure, without an ever renewed interest. I did not seek to discover the source of this feeling; perhaps it arose from a pure egotism, which my vanity coloured with the fine name of humanity; this kind of feeling may come from the fact, that the hard labour of these poor men saves mine; without them should we not be obliged to gather in ourselves the fruits which the earth produces for our food? else must we die of misery and hunger in presence of all her richest products. (Millin, vol. iv. ch. 100.)]

Note 6, stanza 24, line 4.

["A galoubet and tambourine." Galoubet, or fiûtet, is the name of a small flute with only three holes, but which is capable of being made to produce all the notes of the gamut. It is in constant use, and of great antiquity.]

Note 7, stanza 29, line 6.

"On thy left hand thy reeden gauntlet bind." Doigtiers de roseau, fingerstalls of reed, which the reapers fit on the left hand to save it from being wounded by the sickle.

Note 8, stanza 36, line 3.

"Cachat, that all its pungent fame maintained." Cachat, a kneaded cheese, that acquires by fermentation an exceedingly piquant taste. This dish figures daily on the farm servants' table.

Note 9, stanza 36, line 4.

"Aubergines, fresh, hot,
And hissing."

[The aubergine, *solanum melongena esculentum*, a variety of the Egg Plant, Mad Apple, or Jew's Apple, originally imported from South America, is cultivated in the South of France, where it is held in much esteem, and eaten fried or broiled, or in stews and soups. It is said (*English Cyclopædia*) that in fine summers this plant will even produce fruit in England, if planted out against a wall in June, after being raised in a hot-bed.]

Note 10, stanza 43, line 1.

"The angry season of La Vache." Les jours nefastes de la Vache. The last three days of March and the first four of April, a period dreaded by the peasants. The Provençal legend of La Vieille has been explained in note 8 to canto vi. The following is the sequel of this fable.

When La Vieille had lost her flock of sheep, she bought cows, and having reached without mishap the end of March, she said imprudently:—

"En escapant de Mars et de Marseu,
Ai escapa mi vaco et mi redeù."

March, hurt by the words, immediately went in search of April, and said:—

"Abrieu n'ai plus que tres jour; presto m'en quatre,
Si vaco de la vieio faren vatre!"

April consented to the loan; a late and terrible frost blasted all vegetation, and poor La Vieille lost her whole herd.

Note 11, stanza 57, line 1.

"Howbeit on Christmas night, beneath his tent." Christmas is the chief festival of Provence. The author had prepared the following description of its celebration, but to avoid lengthening the text, transferred it to the notes.

O Christmas, parent of all home delight,
Where have thy peace and hearty pleasures strayed?
The season smile that made each age more bright,
The child yet happier, and more sweet the maid?
The trembling-hand, toil-hard, that o'er the feast
The Cross designed, what time the laughter ceased?

Then from the furrow early turned the hind,
And lads and damsels diligently flew,
Their work exchanged for holy joy, to bind
The kindred bosoms to their own anew,
Eat the charmed celery, and help to raise
The log long destined to the household blaze.

Crisp from the oven, gaily wreathed and crowned
With holly, stands upon the poplar board
The Christmas loaf, three tapers placed around,
New, bright, priest-blessed, a sacred light afford;
Three shining porringers are stationed near,
Where sprouts new wheat, the first-fruits of the year.

Tottering with age and tall, before the house,
Stands a wild pear-tree; this the first-born cleaves
Hard by the ground, quick his brisk axe the boughs
Smoothes from the trunk, that on his back he heaves;
The Christmas table gained, with reverence meet,
He lays his burden at the grandsire's feet.

Nought of his antique habitudes will waste
That ancient man, back from his brow he'd roll
His hat's broad eave, then seek with solemn haste
The hoarded bottle, don his camisole
Of honoured serge, the belt now pinching in,
His wedding gaskins, and his greaves of skin.

Around him press his bustling folk. "Prepare
To set the log, my children." "Glad we will,"
One-voiced they cry. "Quick, quick, and be our prayer
That God each heart with loving promptness fill;
And if, next feast, we count no more than this,
Grant, Lord, no dear one from our board we miss."

Thrice from full glass he bathes the fallen tree
With generous Claret 'mid the merry throng;
The last-born clasps one end, the other he,
Brothers and sisters range both sides along;
Thrice round the tapers, round the house they bear
The dripping stem, while laughter tunes the air.

The crystal goblet o'er his head on high
  The patriarch lifts; "Thou, holy fire," he prays,
"Deal out our seasons from a fruitful sky;
  The yeaning mother of my flock upraise;
To cow and goat grant offspring oft and good,
Son's wife and daughter easy motherhood."

"Blaze forth, blessed log," they cry, with rising mirth
  And hands well bronzed, and stout the cumbrous mass
They grasp, and heave it on the ample hearth;
  Then the rich cakes all round the table pass,
Oil, almond, honey-savoured, quaint of shape,
And hot spiced wine beside the parent grape.

Thou might'st have said that fateful bodings sparked
  From the clear fire—that guardian spirits smiled
From out the tufted flames, or curled wick marked
  Some lacking guest, mayhap some far-off child;
The cloth was stainless spite of fallen coal,
The cat around in mute approval stole.

Note 12, stanza 60, line 6.

"A popinjay hath lured
Thy wits, to quit a melon for a gourd."

Un freluquet suffit pour te séduire. S'encoucourda, the original expression, signifies to buy a gourd for a melon, figuratively, to make a blunder, marry badly.

Note 13, stanza 72, line 1.

"What think'st of Mont-de-Vergue or St. Pilon?" Mont-de-Vergue, a hill to the east of Avignon. Le St. Pilon or St. Puy, the name of a peaked rock in which has been formed the grotto where St. Magdalene retired.

Note 14, stanza 75, line 2.

"Who worked like satyr in the sweltering field." Comme un satyre. The equivalent for working like a negro is, in Provence, like a satyr. The ancients must have taken the wild blacks for divinities of the woods, and named hem satyrs, and in the popular mind these two words have become synonymous.

Note 15, stanza 78, line 4.

["They beat the measure of the farandole." The farandole is the truly national dance of Provence, and appears to be of Greek origin. Ten, twenty, thirty, even a hundred persons join hands and form chains, in which the sexes are mixed indifferently: these chains are led either by a man or a woman; they are sometimes composed entirely of men, or of women. When these many bands meet, they pass rapidly before each other in contrary directions. The whole bound to the sound of the galoubet or tambourine, repeating an air of which the leader gives the note. In this way they parade through the streets, and then form many circles round the May-pole, or a large walnut-tree, under which the ball is to take place.]

Note 16, stanza 81, line 1.

"With vollied shouts they feign
The Saints' Bravade."

[Bravade, discharges of musketry which accompanied the lighting of the fires on the Feast of St. John, and extended here to the preliminary ceremonies and kindling of the fire.

The celebration of the Festival of St. John is often referred to by M. Millin and other travellers. The following description, which includes several national customs, may be thought not out of place here. M. Millin, speaking of the triumphal arch at Orange, says, that one side now bears the inscription, "Du règne de M. Mure, Roy," and proceeds:—

"This commemorates the fact that the king of the Crossbowmen contributed, in 1706, to the repair of the arch. M. Mure or de Mure was at that time their king. The Counts of Provence and the Dauphins had created or sanctioned the establishment, in the Thirteenth Century, in all their towns of Corps of Archers; they reckoned on forming their subjects for war, and making them more expert by these institutions. The Crossbowmen nominated a king on one of the Sundays after Easter: whoever, on the day named, shot a bird, placed at a certain distance, was named king. This bird was a real or artificial parrot, and in earlier times a magpie. It was called at that time 'le perroquet papagay,' or père gay, or bavard. The king was colonel of the troop. He presided over their exercises, and led them in the procession of the Fête-Dieu, or that of the Eve of St. John, when they proceeded to the solemn lighting of the bonfire. He enjoyed certain privileges in respect to duties on provisions, and exemption from soldiers being billeted on him. He wore a dress distinguished by much lace, and a hat distinguished by many feathers. The march of the Crossbowmen was called 'le bravade.' The king was chosen for one year only. These companies existed in some towns up to the time of the Revolution. That of Aix latterly made its appearance on the Eve of St. John only; the king was called King of St. John

or the Bravade. Till the Sixteenth Century this company was armed with bows and pikes; it afterwards assumed the musket. During the whole day of St. John's Eve, they paraded the streets of Aix, and on St. John's Day they accompanied the procession of the Parliament, to light, in solemn form, one bonfire in the Place des Prêcheurs, in front of the Palace, and another in front of the Church of St. John. Several thousand shots were fired on these occasions."

So far the bright side; elsewhere M. Millin says:—

"It was the Eve of St. John, and in all the streets (of Draguignan) were lighted fires, at which the people were roasting cloves of garlic for distribution to every family. This custom probably owed its origin to the ravages of the plague in these countries.

"Whilst listening to the merriment going on round the fires, I found myself deluged with water. I endeavoured to make my way to my inn, but it was impossible to avoid the showers which rained upon me from every house. Whilst this was going on, I heard proclamation made to the sound of the trumpet, forbidding, under severe penalties, the throwing of water on the passers-by. It is possible that the inhabitants of Draguignan will have some difficulty in giving up this amiable amusement. I advise travellers in Provence to remain at home on the Eve of St. John."

M. Millin also mentions the custom as practised in other places.

CANTO VIII.

CRAY.

Mirelle's despair—Arlesian toilette—The young girl, in the middle of the night, flies from her parents' house—She goes to the tomb of the Holy Maries, to supplicate these patronesses of Provence to prevail with her father—The constellations—In her course across Cray she meets her father's shepherds—Cray—The war of the giants—The lizards—The prophet beetles and butterflies caution Mirelle—Mirelle panting with thirst, overcome by the heat, implores St. Gent, who gives her succour—Meeting with Andrelon, the collector of snails—Eulogy of Arles—Andrelon's story ; legend of the Cavern of La Cape —The treading out of the corn—The destruction of all employed—Mirelle passes the night under the tent of Andrelon's family.

I.

Who'd think the maddened lioness to bind,
Her lair re-entered, and young monarch gone,
As she bounds swift and roaring as the wind,
Light-limbed from mother cares o'er hill and lawn ?
The Moorish hunter o'er the prickly plain
At gallop far his tawny prey hath ta'en.

2.

And who shall bind you, maidens love betossed?
In her sad chamber, where the cruel night
Prolongs its torture, sleep and hope all lost,
Weeps Mirelle, watching for the dreaded light;
On her crossed hands her burning temples laid,
"Lady of love," she sobs, "thy suppliant aid."

3.

"Hard searing fate, and harder father, who
My life dost trample, an thou saw my heart
So torn and bleeding, sure thou'dst tune anew
That name of darling—pity be thy part—
Nor 'neath an iron yoke my weakness bow,
As some rough colt thou'dst manage to the plough.

4.

"O sea, why break'st thou not thy bounds to drown
Cray's fatal breadths, and this my cursed domain,
Source of my tears? What joy to know them down
Far 'neath the sunlight, and thy glassy plain,—
Why was I not of beggar-woman born,
In serpent's hole, contented, nor forlorn?

5.

"Then if perchance some poor but honest lad
Had charmed my heart, or Vincent will'd my hand,
Were marriage welcomed—oh! had I thee to glad
My soul, sweet Vincent, ivy could not band
Thy life so firm—the wheel-rut were my spring;
Thy kiss would surfeit to my hunger bring."

6.

Thus on her bed disconsolately wept
The beauteous child, her bosom fever burned,
And love convulsed, when back her memory leaped
To love's first steps so exquisitely learned,
Then sudden bounded to that sure relief
That Vincent counselled for her day of grief.

7.

"Said'st thou not once the cornel trees among—
Ah! sure thou said'st—'If ever noxious bite
Of dog, or wolf, or snake with poisoned tongue,
Thy fair flesh harm, or if misfortune blight
Thy youthful strength—oh! to those saints repair,[1]
Thou'lt not unanswered weep thy sorrows there.'

8.

"This day my grief's abundance I can vouch;
I'll forth, and hasten back a pilgrim blessed,"
She said; and starting from her small white couch,
Took a bright key, which oped a walnut chest,
That held her vesture wealth, a coffer rare,
Where bloomed a garden from the sculptor's care.

9.

There were her small girl's treasures held in ward,
The crown she wore when first God's meal she eat,
A sprig of lavender, a cherished hoard,
A slim wax taper, fondly treasured yet,
Though often burned; 'twas blessed to charm away
What thunder clouds might threat a distant day.

10.

With a white cord around her slender waist[2]
She bound a scarlet kirtle; rare the art
Wherewith her hand had shaped it, and had laced
With finely needled broidery every part
In elfin checks; then over it she threw
One of yet finer floss and softer hue.

11.

In a black boddice next she light compressed
So rich in elegance her shapely form,
One golden spearlet pledged it to her breast,
Her hair in tresses long, of auburn warm,
With two-fold cloak her ivory neck arrayed,
And as the wantons thus profusely strayed,

12.

With their luxuriant coils her hands she filled,
And bound them back in cage of filmy lace,
Secured their bondage, next she o'er them twilled
With all familiar promptitude of grace,
Three bands of riband blue, and form'd of them
For her young brow her Arlian diadem.

13.

Her apron fastened, virginal of spot
She 'cross her breast her muslin kerchief laid,
In small but many pleats, but then forgot,
Alas! the tiring of Provençal maid,
The elfin hat with giant wings outspread,
That from the sun should shield and fan her head.

14.

This done, the earnest girl the oaken stair
Descending stealthy scarce its lustre grazed,
Her hand her unshod foot's apparel bare,
The door's great bar with noiseless strength upraised,
To her good saints she prayed their child to guide,
And swift as air the scowling night defied.

15.

It was the magic hour when sailors greet
The constellations radiant with good,
When at the gospel penman's holy feet 3
His eagle rests, and from his sisterhood
Of triple luminaries looks the while
Through the calm sky the stars serenely smile.

16.

And through the spangled firmament ascends
On its winged wheels the Chariot of the Blest,
With load of souls redeemed through space it tends
To paradise and realms of endless rest;
The murky mountains higher rise to see
The soaring chariot with its galaxy.

17.

Straight as her purpose darted on Mirelle,
Like Maguelona, fugitive princess, 4
Who in Provence, through forest, vale and fell,
Her royal lover sought in bitterness,
Far off was he by savage tempests borne,
And she abandoned love and shame to mourn.

18.

Now past the plough's domain, she gained a fold:
Where pent for milking stood her father's sheep;
She might have seen the thoughtful shepherds hold
Their heads, lest moved their shelter to o'erleap,
The dusky lambs should shiver o'er the meal,
Bleat followed bleat in passionate appeal.

19.

Some to the milker drove the ewes bereaved;
He, on his seat of stone in darkness set,
Silent as night the bursting dugs relieved
While to his long-drawn pressure flowed the jet,
Genial and warm the greedy pail to fill,
And o'er its border lace a foamy frill.

20.

The dogs lay round in provident repose,
Grand beasts with hide of lily in its prime,
Noble as great they fringed the guarded close,
Their muzzles lengthened as they pressed the thyme;
Lulled by the balmy air all sleeps the while
Through the calm sky the stars serenely smile.

21.

The fold she brushed as like the lightning passed
Mirelle; together huddled flocks and men,
As when they stoop the head to sudden blast;
"Is there no herd in this my father's pen
Will to the Maries with his child repair?"
She spoke and vanished as a thing of air.

22.

The awakened dogs their maiden mistress knew,
And slept afresh—o'er the dwarf oaks' domain,
Grazing their tops, she lone, unanswered, flew
Like a young partridge darting o'er the plain,
Scarce on the millet tufts or camphire trod,
Nor once her slender foot impressed the sod.

23.

Ofttimes the curlews, nestling breast to breast
Beneath the oaklings in the tangled ling,
Started from watchful sleep, as on she pressed,
And flapped around her with uncertain wing;
Their cries of "Courreli" their swarms betray,
And jar the night of bare and gloomy Cray.

24.

But now the morn, her tresses pearled with dew,
Descended daintily the mountain side;
The praiseful larks set up their crests anew,
And poured in legions down their choral tide;
The caverned Alpine upward seemed to soar,
The sun with nearer homage to adore.

25.

The waking day with measured hand and slow
Cray's arid space disclosed, and fields untilled;
Vast Cray whose stones no glittering harvest know,
Cray, ancient land, where once, so fame hath willed,
Her primal sons, a giant race, defied
Heaven's flood of wrath to crush their rebel pride.

26.

They thought, self-glorious fools, man's scaling gear
And their own backs the Almighty should o'erthrow,
E'en now their leverage had prevailed to tear 7
St. Victorie's crest and hurl beneath its snow;
Now hasted Alpine to uproot and bring,
And on Ventour its loosed escarpments fling.

27.

But Heaven its hand stretched out and o'er them sent
The mistral, thunderbolt, and hurricane,
Three plagues like eagles on the slaughter bent,
To the salt depth they plunged for death and bane,
Quarried the marble from the ocean bed,
Then with their mist of granite upward sped.

28.

The thunderbolt, the hurricane, and blast,
'Neath giant silt the crew colossal crushed;
Cray, where the twelve winds all their vengeance cast,
The desert Cray to desert horror hushed,
Still sleeps like corpse 'neath granite winding sheet:
Mirelle, far past her father's widest mete,

29.

Hurried apace. The sun's meridian glare,
And downward rushing of his javelin rays
A trembling lustre kindled in the air;
While 'neath the herb that shrivelled in the blaze,
With snap of castanet the cigales beat
Their mimic tymbals with their drumming feet.

30.

No tree to shade, no soul is there to cheer
A faltering step—the flocks that winter browsed
The short but savoury bounty of the year,
Through the vast wild unfolded and unhoused,
For the high Alp, and bountiful as sweet,
The breezy turf, have left the lowland heat.

31.

While June pours down his smelted streams of fire,
Still runs, and runs, and runs the wild Mirelle,
The huge grey lizards to their holds retire,
And say, "Some fury's stripes her steps propel
Thus o'er the flints; while to the flaming dart
Above the plants, below the pebbles start."

32.

The prophet beetles 'neath their niggard shade [8]
Of sedges cry, "O pilgrim maiden, turn,
Turn where our God the watercourse hath laid,
Where His trees screen, nor let the sunbeams burn
Thy cheek, whose beauty is His work's delight,
That thou thus offerest to the sun's despite."

33.

Now warn the gazing butterflies in vain,
The wings of love, and sovereign gales of faith
Still bear her on as on the salty plain
Of Aigues-mortes, when the seabird landward stray'th,
The storm will bear him at its tyrant will;
Now far and wide and absolutely still,

34.

A cote, by shepherds and by flocks resigned,
With reed-mace covered, in the waste appears,
Nor brook nor pool her gasping thirst can find,
Though each dry bed she resolutely nears,
Then as she trembles thus she strives to pray:
"St. Gent, illustrious hermit of Bausset, [9]

35.

"Blest husbandman and beautiful as young,
Who to thy plough the mountain wolf could'st tame,
At whose pure prayer, divine recluse, there sprung
From the hard rock, to glorify thy name,
Two streams of wine and water, that by faith
Should raise thy mother from a thirst to death;

36.

"Thou, like thy suppliant, when all was sleep,
Thine home didst quit, till to Bausset's ravines
Thy parent came, where thou, with God, didst keep
Thy watch; oh! send me from thy placid scenes
The limpid succour—gracious saint, the stones
My footsteps scorch, and thirst inflames my bones."

37.

The pitying saint from the empyréan hears,
And straight inspirited Mirelle divines,
How afar off a ring of stones appears,
That guard a spring, whereon the sunbeam shines,
Off through the leaden air her footsteps glide,
Swift as the swallow skimming o'er the tide.

38.

'Twas an old well with ivy growth o'erlaid,
Whereof the desert flocks rejoiced to drink;
A little boy was playing in the shade
Of the few sheltering stones that formed its brink;
Singing at times he watched with childish pride
The snails that filled a basket at his side.

39.

As one by one the child delighted laid
The stubble-climbers on his tawny hand, [10]
"Come forth, come forth," he sang, "white cloister maid, [11]
Quick from thy nunnery forth, at my command,
Thrust thy sweet eye-tipped hornlets from thy cell,
Or, by my faith, I'll crush thy convent shell."

40.

Way-flushed the beauteous child of Cray had quaffed,
Her lips deep plunged beneath the wave and long,
And now, divorced her sweet lips from the draught,
She asked him, "Darling, tell me of thy song;"
He paused, "Thy snails thou glean'st from herb and stone"
"Thou guessest well," replied the little one.

41.

"Look in my basket, see how thick they lie;
I've Nuns, and Stubble-climbers, and Platelles."
"And dost thou eat them?" "Nay, forsooth, not I;
To Arles each Wednesday mother goes and sells
Whate'er I catch, and brings us back sweet bread;
Sure thou hast been at Arles?" "Nay, ne'er," she said.

42.

"Hast ne'er seen Arles? and I so small and young,
I, who now speak, have all its wonders known;
Would thou could'st see them congregated 'mong
The abounding waters of the seven-fold Rhone;
Poor maid, its vastness would thy darkness daze,
What herds of sable bulls its islets graze!

43.

"Arles, o'er whose plains the freeborn coursers stray,
Whose wheat of increase of an hundred fold,
Would with each year seven years of famine stay;
On every wave her fishers' freights are rolled;
To far off seas her fearless seamen fly,
Provoke their dangers, and their storms defy."

44.

Thus drew the marvels of his sunny land
The boy, her glorying child, with golden tongue,
Her blue sea rippling on her silver strand,
Mont Majour where the pulpy olives hung,
That now the never-resting mill supply,
Her marshes salt, and lowing bittern's cry.

45.

But O, sweet city of the rich dark hue,
Not to thy chiefest marvel soared his strain;
Thy skies, O bounteous land of Arles endue
Thy nymphs with beauties stainless as the main,
Thy grapes to challenge in their autumn bloom,
Thy mountain's scented breath and songster's plume.

46.

Unlistening pensive stood the rustic maid
Awhile, at length, "Dear boy, thou'lt come with me,
Thou'lt come with me?" imploringly she said.
"Ere the frog 'gin his dismal monody,
Rhone's yonside willows and the friendly sod
Must be my screen and couch, my guardian God."

47.

Answered the boy, "Gramercy, fortune fair
Did to us fisher folk your footsteps guide,
'Neath the white poplars lies our tent, and there
Thou'lt guest with us, nor lay thy robe aside;
Then in our boat with earliest hint of day,
Will father proudly speed thee on thy way."

48.

"Nay, for my strength is measured to my course,
'Twill bear me through the hours of tempered skies;"
"God fend! Would'st seek the spirits of remorse,
That from La Cape's dread cave to-night will rise?
Oh! woe were thee to tread their fatal path,
They'd sink thee with them in their pit of wrath."

49.

"But of this woful cavern tell me more;"
"Yea, maiden, as our flinty way we pick,
All shalt thou hear; a monstrous threshing floor [13]
Old times there was, that stood with sheaves as thick
As shore with pebbles—on thy morrow's way
Thou'lt see the beach where high o'er Rhone it lay.

50.

" Full a long month in faltering giddy round
Had Camargue's horses trodden out the corn;
So ripe its grains spontaneous blocked the ground,
In the stern labour night was twin with morn;
Ne'er were their hoofs unshackled, yet the store
To tread seemed growing on the dusty floor.

51.

" The air was sun-scorched, the half-trodden grain
Seemed wrapt in fire, that wooden forks still dashed
Aloft as would the whirlwind on the plain,
To be again beneath the hoofage threshed;
Straw chips and beards in clouds as arrows flew,
And stung and drilled the snorting nostrils through.

52.

" How vain in Arles the consecrated chime!
St. Charles! St. Peter's tuneful voice, how vain!
The horses knew nor feast nor sabbath time,
Their feet their tramp ne'er ceased, nor goad its pain;
Grim in the vortex of the eddying food,
Thundering his brute commands the guardian stood.

53.

"The niggard master on his brave white file
The churlish muzzle, woe's the day, had clamped,
Our Lady's tide of August came, the while
O'er the bruised sheaves the beasts in couples cramped
The dizzy circle traced, their flanks all fume,
Their ribs were hollow, and their nostrils spume.

54.

"See, now in angry rivalry of woe
Start forth the thunder and the icy blast,
One breath of mistral sweeps the floor, and, lo,
They, who on God's blest day had despite cast,
Grope eyeless; yawns the shaken earth and straight,
As in black cauldron plunged, they own their fate.

55.

"As one delirious spins the garnered store,
To escape the foul abyss none, nought prevails;
The headsman and the hind that fed the floor,
The lord, the unholy place, and, with its sails,
The winnowing fan, the drivers and their stud,
Are all hurled down as pebbles by the flood."

56.

Exclaims Mirelle—"Thou chill'st my soul with fear"—
"Not yet, sweet maiden, is my legend o'er;
To-morrow (my simplicity thou'lt jeer
Mayhap) shalt thou the azure pool explore,
Where sport the carp and tench, what time their song
The water thrushes in the reeds prolong.

57.

"But when our Lady's holy hour shall shine,
As mounts the flame-crowned monarch of the day,
His Pontiff seat, to earth thine ear incline,
And watch as silent as the noiseless ray;
Thou'lt see the gulf, its shrinking waves drawn in,
Grow slowly dark with shadows of that sin,

58.

"And from its troubled depths thou'lt gradual hear
A sound of fluttering fly, or humming bee,
To tinkling bells it changes silver clear,
Next from the cresses surges measuredly
The buzz of voices in a hollow vase,
Till beats thy heart like bird against the bars.

59.

"Then will ensue the trot of famished steeds,
That tyrant driver hustles o'er the corn,
With cries and cursing oath, not gently leads;
Dull ghastly tramp, o'er painful ground hoof-worn,
Harsh, dry, where ruts and stumbling stones distress,
Their sound like summer barn in hollowness.

60.

"But with the ebbing of the holy sun,
The yells, the curses wane away and die,
The cough of horses stumbling as they run,
Sinks in deep distance with the torturer's cry;
To clang of bells no more the cresses play,
And 'mid the reeds the thrush retunes his lay."

61.

Jaunting his basket with his slimy load,
The boy such-wise his lore discoursing led
The maiden sad and thoughtful on her road;
The arid mountain to the sky now wed
By day's High Priest, was dowered with his light,
Its ramparts blue, its promontories white.

62.

And he, retiring slowly to his court,
The holy centre of his radiant love,
Left o'er the earth the peace that God had wrought,
O'er marsh, Grand Clar, and boundless olive grove [15]
Of Vallongue, o'er the breadths of Rhone, and hind
From harvest toil erect, who drinks the wind.

63.

Then cried the boy, "Look forward, lass, and see,
How Zephyr plays the ensign of our tent,
And poplar white whereto it stands a-lee,
And brother Not to climb its summits bent,
May be to catch the cigales, or to trace
My homeward footsteps in the furthest space.

64.

"And now he kens us, little sister Zette,
That lent her shoulder, turns to run and says
To mother ere she's reached her: 'Mother, get
The supper ready, and the bouillabaisse;' [16]
E'en now see mother o'er the boat inclined,
In its cool well the dainty fish to find."

65.

As with one bound the two the fence o'erleapt,
"Heigh," cries the patriarch of the fisher cot;
"Come, wife, and see what draught our young adept,
Our Andrelon, has in his meshes got,
True mate for proudest fishers will he be,
Who brings us home the queen fish of the sea!"

NOTES ON CANTO VIII.

Note 1, stanza 7, line 5.

"To those saints repair." (See note 16, canto i.)

Note 2, stanza 10, line 1.

["With a white cord around her slender waist." The following description by Millin of former Provençal costume, and his lament over its loss, may be considered in place here.

"Formerly the women wore the drollet, which was a small, very short skirt, divided into four stripes or bands, which fell down to the calf of the leg, and for a head dress, a small black hat, trimmed with silk or velvet ribands. This graceful costume has been given up, and the old women, only, put it on on Sundays. Why should this, which was so becoming to the young, have been abandoned? It is now imitated at our theatres when they act 'Aline Reine de Golconde,' 'le Sourel,' 'M. Deschalumeaux,' and other pieces, of which the scene is laid in Provence.

"This was the reigning costume on the banks of the Rhone, from Arles to Avignon. At the present time the women of Arles, Beaucaire, and Tarascon wear, like those in the whole of the rest of France, a sort of corset; the skirt falls to the calf, but the whole is put on with much grace and taste: they like especially good shoes and stockings, the latter of white silk, and the former without heels, and covered with large silver buckles. The women of Beaucaire, Tarascon, and Arles are distinguished by a silk or muslin kerchief, striped with green and yellow, which they put round their heads. Their head dresses are trimmed with lace. They are very fond of jewellery—their arms are surrounded with bracelets of gold threads more or less fine, to which they hang an ornament, called Maltaise, being a sort of medallion in the form of a Maltese cross, and an enormous cross of the same shape covers nearly the whole chest. The richest wear a cross with seven diamonds."]

Note 3, stanza 15, line 3.

"When at the gospel penman's holy feet
His eagle rests."

The constellation of the eagle.

Note 4, stanza 17, line 2.

"Like Maguelona, fugitive princess." Maguelonne. According to an ancient romance of chivalry, as popular as that of "Quatre Fils Aymon," Count Peter of Provence, having carried off Maguelonne, daughter of the king of Naples, fled with her over hill and dale. One day as Maguelonne was sleeping on the sea shore, a bird of prey bore off a jewel, which was shining on the neck of the princess. Her lover embarked in a small boat to pursue the bird, but a tempest suddenly arose, and carried Peter to Egypt, where he was welcomed and loaded with honours by the Sultan. The beautiful Maguelonne awoke, and in the greatest distress set out in search of her lover. After a crowd of romantic adventures they met again in Provence, where Maguelonne, become an abbess, had founded a hospital, around which, according to this fabulous chronicle, the town of Maguelonne afterwards arose.

[This romance was written by Bernard de Freviès, an ecclesiastic, about the year 1178, and was revised by Petrarch. Millin mentions with sorrow the ruinous state of the once beautiful Church of Maguelonne, and his being obliged to climb over a heap of hay, to discover the chapel and the tomb of la belle Maguelonne.

In a monastery at Maguelonne, was discovered in 1541, by Albanus Tourius, a book on cookery ascribed to Apicius.]

Note 5, stanza 24, line 5.

"The caverned Alpine upward seemed to soar." L'Alpine Caverneuse, an epithet suggested by the grottoes of Les Baux and Corde, formed in these mountains. [The trou des fées, in the Montagne des Cordes, was hollowed out at the same time as the walls round Baux were built. It is supposed by some to have a subterraneous connection with the object of Mirelle's imaginary visit.]

Note 6, stanza 25, line 5.

"Her primal sons, a giant race, defied
Heaven's flood of wrath."

[Although so long a description has been given of La Crau in note 3, canto 1, I add the following, in elucidation of this and the following stanzas, alluding to

its fabulous history, and accounting for frequent traces of the worship of Hercules. The first Greek travellers whom trade had attracted to the mouths of the Rhone, remarked this singular country and described it to their countrymen; it could not be supposed that such an accumulation of flints could be formed by any but a supernatural cause: and, for want of any other explanation, recourse was had to the gods. The poets soon assigned a cause for the phenomenon: the ancient tradition has been transmitted by Æschylus. Hercules, he says, after driving away the oxen of Geryon, halted on the banks of the Rhone; he found there a brave people, with whom he had to fight for the preservation of his herd. When he had exhausted his supply of darts, he would have been overwhelmed by numbers, if Jupiter had not supplied him with new arms. The king of the gods showered round him a hail of stones and destroyed his enemies. Dionysius of Halicarnassus gives the same narration. Pomponius Mela has enlarged upon it, and given the names of two principal kings of the Ligurians as Albion and Bergion. According to Theon and Hygerius, the constellation Engonasis, in which a warrior is seen on his knees, casting his darts, represents Hercules on the point of being overwhelmed in this terrible combat. M. Mistral, it will be seen, does not follow this version, but transfers to the scene the battle of gods and giants. Having glanced at the fabulous origin of this strange country, I proceed to give M. Millin's account of the application of science to discover the real cause of its singular character.

Aristotle believed that these stones were produced by an eruption, caused by an earthquake, and were brought together in a hollow space. According to Posidonius they were collected by the fluctuations of a lake, which suddenly dried up. Modern writers have also had their conjectures. Several naturalists, including Darluc, have looked upon these stones as a deposit of the sea. Papon thought they were brought down by the Durance, whose waters, after having passed through the territory of Lamanon, following the direction of the canal of La Crapone, had wandered for ages in this plain; that combined physical revolutions subsequently diverted the river from its course, and fixed it in its present bed. An inspection of the stones of La Crau justifies this opinion; their round form and polished surface show that they must have been for a long time rolled about by waves; their weight varies from a few grains to a hundred pounds; they are nearly all of a different nature from those found in the neighbouring mountains. Amongst them are several species of granite, red and green jasper, cornelians, serpentines, and marble of every colour, and especially variolites similar to those which the Durance brings down with its stream. The matter has been placed beyond all doubt by the persevering researches of the indefatigable Lamanon, who traced back to their sources all the rivers which flow into the Durance, and found quarries of all the stones which it carries down from the Higher Alps to its mouth, and which are the same as those that cover La Crau.]

Note 7, stanza 26, line 3.

"E'en now their leverage had prevailed to tear
St. Victoire's crest."

The mountain (for which the limited term "morne" is here used), or peak of St. Victoire, is to the east of Aix. It is a lofty escarpment, deriving its name from the great victory achieved by Marius over the Teutons at Pourrières, in the neighbourhood.

Note 8, stanza 32, line 1.

["The prophet beetles 'neath their niggard shade." Mantes Religieuses is the text which I have translated as above. The following account is taken from M. Dallas' excellent *History of the Animal Kingdom*, in quoting from which at such length I hope I am not infringing the law of copyright or of courtesy.

"The *Mantis religiosa* is a singular beetle of the tribe *mantina*. As these insects move slowly along, their whole attitude is so solemn that they are regarded with veneration by the inhabitants of all the countries in which they occur. In the south of Europe they are universally known by names indicative of the belief that their singular attitude is one of prayer. According to ancient legends the mantis has not always confined itself to silent devotion, for we are told that one of these insects, on being desired by St. Francis Xavier to sing the praises of God, immediately chanted a beautiful canticle. Another prevalent superstition concerning these creatures is, that if they be asked the way to a place, they will immediately indicate the right road by holding one of their legs in that direction; hence the name of soothsayers often applied to these insects, and the Greek word μαντις has the same signification. Unfortunately, however, all these qualities are purely imaginary. The mantis is one of the most voracious of its class, and only assumes this solemn and devout appearance for the beguilement of its unsuspecting victim. Slowly and cautiously it steals along by almost imperceptible degrees until within striking distance of its prey, when one of the fore legs is instantly extended, and the struggling victim is mangled by the tremendous weapons of the destroyer. These insects are excessively pugnacious, and two of them can scarcely come together without a combat, which generally has a fatal termination. Their manœuvres in these cases resemble those of two horsemen in single combat. The Chinese amuse themselves with the combats of these insects, which they keep for this purpose in little bamboo cases.

"To this mantis are allied the equally, if not more curious insects popularly known as Walking-leaves and Walking-sticks."]

Note 9, stanza 34, line 6.

"St. Gent, illustrious hermit of Bausset." St. Gent, hermit of Bausset, a young ploughman of Monteux, who, at the beginning of the 11th century,

retired to the gorge of Le Bausset (near Vaucluse), to lead the life of a hermit. His hermitage, and the miraculous fountain which he caused to spurt up there, according to a tradition, by placing his fingers on the rock, are the objects of a popular pilgrimage.

Note 10, stanza 39, line 2.

"The stubble-climbers." Hélice des moissons—*helix cæspitum*—called in Provençal "meissounenco," because after the harvest it climbs up and glues itself to the stubble.

Note 11, stanza 39, line 3.

"Come forth, white cloister maid." Nounain, *helix vermiculata—Platelle—helix algera.* [I do not find any of these snails described or named in the English Cyclopædia.]

Note 12, stanza 45, line 4.

["Thy nymphs with beauties stainless as the main." "When the unhealthiness of the climate is considered," says M. Millin, "the beauty of the women (of Arles), which has been celebrated in all ages, is astonishing: their complexion is of a dazzling whiteness, their features are agreeable and regular, their hair black as ebony, their smile sweet, their expression enchanting, and a piquant liveliness lights up their countenance. Nowhere is the Provençal language better spoken, and in their mouths it has an indescribable sweetness; the terms which they employ are as seductive as their expression is attractive. The charming diminutives which they use are analogous with the Italian and Castilian languages only."]

Note 13, stanza 49, line 3.

["A monstrous threshing floor." The floors on which the corn is trodden out are sometimes of turf, but turf not offering sufficient resistance, the grain is separated with greater difficulty. There are also some threshing floors paved with stones, but in these the grain is often lost between the stones. The most common, and most generally preferred, are those of beaten earth. Horses, oxen, mules, and even asses are employed.

In other parts of Provence the operations of treading out, sifting, and sacking the wheat are carried on simultaneously, but the great yield of the harvest in the "arrondissement" of Arles makes it necessary to complete the treading out before the other processes are commenced.

The horses of Camargue are of a peculiar race; it is supposed that they are a deteriorated breed of Arabs, those from whom they descend having been intro-

duced by the Saracens. They are like the Arab in shape; they have generally a straight chest, long haunches, the croup of a mule, and they are, almost without exception, white. They are not handsome: an amateur of high-bred and pleasing looking animals would not think of providing his stable with them, but they are stout, fearless, full of courage, and unusually springy and fast. Their motions display strength and grace; they wheel round with agility and precision; they have a very fine mouth; they gallop near the ground like Arabs, they live on little and endure great fatigue: for several days running they will do from forty miles to upwards of fifty a day, they are intelligent and easily trained. Their attachment to the soil on which they are born is so great that, if allowed to escape, they sometimes return from a distance of 60 miles, swimming across the Rhone. They are employed chiefly for ferrades, and for treading out the corn.]

Note 14, stanza 51, line 5.

["Straw chips and beards in clouds as arrows flew." The horses' feet crush the straw into little fragments, so that it may be said to be pounded.]

Note 15, stanza 62, line 4.

"O'er marsh, Grand Clar, and boundless olive grove
Of Vallongue."

Grand Clar, a vast étang of La Crau, between les Baux and Arles. Vallongue, a valley of the Alpines.

Note 16, stanza 64, line 4.

["And the bouillabaisse." The bouillabaisse is an excellent soup, according to Millin, made of fish, principally, a sort of millet, and bread. The word signifies, il bout, descends la marmite, which means that the fish should be served quickly (qui est cuit après quelques bouillons).]

CANTO IX.

THE GATHERING.

Dismay of Master Raymond and Jeanne Marie on perceiving the absence of Mirelle—The old man sends out to gather in the yard all the farm labourers—The mowers, the female haymakers, the haymaking, the waggoners, the rick-making, the ploughmen—The harvest people, the harvest, the gleaners—The shepherds—Story of Laurence de Goult, chief harvestman—The stroke of the sickle—Story of the reaper, John Bouquet—The nest invested by ants—Story of Marran, chief of the ploughmen—The presage of death—Story of Antelme, chief of the shepherds—Antelme had seen Mirelle on her way to the Holy Maries—Excitement and invectives of the mother—Departure of the family in pursuit of Mirelle.

I.

THE Cornel grove was drooping with dismay,
The bees, forgetful of their fragrant thrift,
Of thyme and mint, in celled seclusion lay;
A lily erst her sunken head would lift
From out the tide, and cry, "Blue halcyons, tell,
Oh! tell me, have ye nowhere seen Mirelle?"

2.

Old Raymond and his spouse so desolate,
Death in their hearts, man's tears with woman's blent,
Hastening the ripening of their sorrow sate [1]
In that lone Croft—"Sure hath some madness rent
Her soul, and sense; O child, what woes set in,
When youth hands o'er its innocence to sin!

3.

"Our beauteous, sweet Mirelle,—oh! shame profound,
Parent malign of tears, with one is fled,
Basest of beggar knaves, a gipsy hound;
And who shall guide us, lost one, to the shed,
Or cave unseemly where thy caitiff thief
Hath dragged thee?" thus they groaned their bitter grief.

4.

[1] With the she-ass and panniers at the door
(The morning wont) the henchman stood and spake
Good-day, and of the master asked the store
Of eggs and fare for grand-boire, when thus brake [2]
The old man forth, "Go, get thee back, bereaved
Of her, like cork-tree I'm unbarked, unleaved.

5.

"Fly, steward, draw no breath upon the road,
To whence thou comest, over field and brook,
Nor lightning faster—gather all abroad,
All mowers, heavers, waggoners, his hook
Fling down the reaper, bid the plough lie still,
And flocks and herds let wander at their will;

6.

"Speed every soul to me." He scarce hath ceased,
With foot of goat the faithful zealot springs,
O'er flinty soils with scarlet santfoin pieced
He flies, and alleyed oaks on loyal wings,
O'erleaps a sunken road with one great bound,
Till the hay's incense vapours all around.

7.

The lucerne tufts in many a high blue arch,
The scythe builds up, its creak he hears afar,
He sees the mowers in their sturdy march
Bent o'er the swath, cast wide the sweeping war,
The grass turns o'er as mapped in mountain chains,
Beneath the tyrant steel, and stripes the plains.

8.

Girl-children, who their work with laughter while,
In rows with rakes the swath yet sappy ted,
Or of the dried heap up a towering pile;
The crickets that before the mower fled,
List to their childish songs—a wain of oak,
Two snow-white oxen stooping 'neath their yoke,

9.

Welcomes the harvest in its wide embrace;
The waggon-chief deep buried in the heap
Adjusts great armfuls to their fitting space
That length and breadth their due proportion keep;
Next with neat hand he trims the giddy height,
Wheels, shafts, rakes, ladders buried all in night.

10.

And as the waggon with its shapely freight
Looms o'er the plain, scarce were a sight more fair,
A ship whose every sail fair winds dilate;
But, see, the loadsman stands erect with air
Of one who fights, to no disaster blind,
"Mowers, avast! there's trouble in the wind,"

II.

He cries—his subject helpmates who but now
Hoisted on long-lanced forks the balanced hay,
Put off the honest moisture from their brow,
The mowers gaze across the shaven ley,
The scythe-back 'gainst their leathern girdle set,
They still its edge, no idle watchmen, whet.

12.

"Men," cries the rustic herald, "what hath lawed
The master, list—go, fly o'er field and brook,
Nor lightning faster, gather all abroad,
All mowers, heavers, waggoners, his hook
Fling down the reaper—bid the plough lie still,
And flocks and herds let wander at their will;

13.

"Speed every soul to me." His duty spent,
With foot of goat the faithful zealot springs,
O'er madder fields, he mocks impediment,
That plant that Althen's name with honour wings,
All round Maturity hath stretched her hand,
And marked her fiat with her golden brand.

14.

He sees the fallows star-lit with the glare
Of aureole herb, and ploughmen pace behind
Their mules, intent and bending o'er the share,
Awoke from winter sloth, the earth unbind
Her shapeless clods, and in the plough's deep wake
Their speedy meal the scudding wagtails take.

15.

"Men," cries the rustic herald, "what hath lawed
The master, list—go, fly o'er field and brook,
Nor lightning faster, gather all abroad,
All mowers, heavers, waggoners, his hook
Fling down the reaper—bid the plough lie still,
And flocks and herds let wander at their will;

16.

"Speed every soul to me." His duty spent,
With foot of goat the faithful zealot springs,
He trips o'er ditches banked with meadow scent,
Aside the white oats in his ardour flings,
Vast tracts of wheat with ruddy ear mature
He sunders, lost as buried in the moor.

17.

Here forty sickles, forty tongues of flame,
Its graceful vesture sunder from the soil,
And o'er its sweets their tyrant rights proclaim;
Like ravening wolves, that gallop as they spoil,
They crop the bounty of the vernal shower,
And earth of all her virgin bloom deflower.

18.

Behind the men in files as straight and true
As shoot of vine that 'long the trellis creeps,
Lies the felled corn, and now the female crew
Of binders gather and embrace their heaps,
The measured sheaf they swathe with platted gear,
Then raise the knee and pitch it in the rear.

19.

Like wings of swarming bees the sickles flash,
Or as the wavelets of a summer sea,
Or shiny flounders, when they sport and splash;
Their ruddy beards, jammed up confusedly,
The shocks in formly pyramids arise,
Their numbers vast as glorious their size.

20.

Thus mimicked peace the tented camp of war,
War-decked was thus the sad Beaucaire's expanse,
When Simon led behind the bloody car
Of holy legate the crusade of France,
God's name their war-cry, brave Provence to drown
In her own blood, and strike her Raymond down.

21.

Yet up and down the damsel gleaners trip
Joyous, and in their hands their booty press;
Or many, fancy-faint, aside will slip
'Neath some bewitching gaze in feigned distress,
Seeking unreal shade, demure and coy,—
Love for the nonce can be a harvest boy.

22.

"Men," cried the rustic herald, "what hath lawed
The master, list—go, fly o'er field and brook,
Nor lightning faster, gather all abroad,
All mowers, heavers, waggoners, his hook
Fling down the reaper—bid the plough lie still,
And flocks and herds let wander at their will;

23.

"Speed every soul to me." His duty spent,
With foot of goat the faithful zealot springs;
Through the grey olive groves, untired, intent
Pursues his lightning path, then backward wrings
And twines the vine branch, as his way he grasps,
Where partridge calls alone respond his gasps.

24.

O'er Cray's bleak steppes, beneath the scant of shade
Of stunted oaks, afar the flocks recline,
The shepherd lads, around their chieftain laid,
Their mid-day watch for couch of thyme resign;
While o'er their backs the fearless starlings scud,
The listless flocks protract the savoury cud.

25.

Far o'er the slumber of the tideless sea
Unfolds a mist diaphanous and white,
Mayhap above in holy rapture free
In the impalpable and blissful height,
Some virgin-martyr saint her veil of nun,
Unspotted witness, opens to the sun.

26.

"Men," cries the rustic herald, "what hath lawed
The master, list—go, fly o'er field and brook,
Nor lightning faster—summon all abroad,
All mowers, heavers, waggoners, his hook
Fling down the reaper—bid the plough lie still,
And flocks and herds let wander at their will."

27.

The scythe was silent, and stood still the plough,
The forty mountaineers who pruned the wheat
Their hooks flung down, they gathered, as on bough
Of fragrant pine, when first their wings can beat,
The fluttering swarm of youthful exiles cling,
Lured by the mocking of the cymbal's ring.

28.

All seek the Croft, the girders of the sheaf,
And she who curtsied o'er the swooping rake,
The hinds that tend the waggons, with their chief,
Gleaners and herds a flying column make,
With those the mow who fashioned, and let fall
The sheaves half raised to crown the glossy wall.

29.

Speechless, with sorrow miserably bowed,
Before the Croft, upon its scented lawn,
The pair bereaved await the gathering crowd;
The men, unwilling from their toil withdrawn,
Their chief address: "Good master, thou hast laid
Thy law upon us—lo, thou art obeyed."

30.

Then Master Raymond raised his head and spake,
"Ever the blackest storm high harvest sees;
Woe all! as sleeping we have walked awake,
And o'er our beacons stumbled in our ease,
Oh! spare my lips the burning theme, disclose
Each friend in mercy what he's seen or knows."

31.

Laurence of Goult stood forth—not once had he [6]
Since his young arm the sickle learned to wield,
When wheats were whitened, failed with harvest glee
To Arles to migrate, and engage the field;
Like ancient rock where billows find rebuff,
Or old church wall, his cheek was stained and bluff.

32.

Time-honoured captain of the reaper race,
Though sun might bake, or cramping mistral roar,
Aye was he earliest at the trysting place,
With seven stout lads, who lived their father o'er;
The harvest votes, one voiced, with proud accord,
Had raised this worthy comrade to their lord.

33.

"Red morning, master, heralds rain or snow,
So nature teaches, and we'll hold it true;
I've seen," said Laurence, "what foretells of woe,
Too sure, and tears; His earthquake God endue
With mercy; ere this dawn the flowers had dressed
And chased the unwilling darkness to the west,

34.

"Yet drenched with morning wont, we planned the attack;
'My mates,' I cried, 'to rule our labour true,
Keep trim your ranks,' and as I drew me back,
Bent o'er my aim and forth my sickle threw,
With the first flash from some great fissure welled
The blood that thirty years I've not beheld."

35.

Hereon his severed sinews he laid bare,
Gored from the wound profound, but groan on groan
The dire portent from Mirelle's parents tare;
Then spake John Bouquet, great mid mowers known,
Of Tarascon, and knight of la Tarasque,[7]
Good type of man, mild, friend without a mask.

36.

But when they kept the witches hallowtide,
And la Tarasque triumphant through the land,
With song and dance careered and pageant pride,
Chasing its sombre wont, what other hand
With such neat grace and skill in Condamine[8]
Could pitch and catch the flag and javelin?

37.

Mid mower chieftains he had held the van,
Had he the path of sturdy labour held,
But soon as game or festival began,
No more his whetted scythe o'er meadow belled—
In vaulted tavern or in bowered shade,
Where tripped the farandole, or bull was bayed,

38.

Mad, rake was he, who Raymond thus addressed:
"Master, this morn we mowed with trenchant swoop;
Isled in a clover tuft, I spied a nest
Of landrails flapping in their textile coop,
Delighted bent I o'er the leaning hay,
To cast their numbers and my prize survey.

39.

"But fatal omen, o'er the wretches scoured
In eager legions red ferocious ants,
The fort they'd scaled, the garrison o'erpowered;
There lay three dead—the vermin cormorants
The living harried, and they seemed to plead,
Their heads outstretched, for succour in their need.

40.

"But the embattled cloud from venomed stings
Shot forth more poison than the thistle's fang,
That all its fury 'gainst the assailant flings;
The mother's anguish o'er the meadows rang,
Her dread bereavement to the skies conveyed,
Her sorrows echoed 'gainst my idle blade."

41.

Like spear that strikes an old wound was the tale,
And added torments to the parents' fears;
And as when Cancer and his fires prevail,
In bodeful silence o'er the plain appears
The mounting storm, the north with flashes thrills,
And heaven's dun arch a lurid horror fills,

42.

Approached Le Marran—in all rustic halls
Great name had he, and when on winter nights
The mules devoured the lucerne in their stalls,
The admiring hinds, outwatched their measured lights,
From his past freaks discourse abounding drew,
And (hiring time come round) foreshadowed new.

43.

At seeding time his wage had been assessed,
Each swain his furrow straight began to plot;
Behind Le Marran followed as he pressed
In earth the plough's ears, beam, shafts, or what not;
Who watched the eccentric artist might declare
He could not tell the plough tail from the share.

44.

"And would'st thou, bungler, filch a labourer's gain,
That ne'er a tool could'st handle?" thundered loud
The waggon chief, "I'll wager that the plain
With his mere snout my boar had better ploughed;"
"I take your challenge," quick replied Marran,
"And which of us shall prove the second man,

45.

"Three golden louis shall as forfeit pay,
So sound to clear the lists." The ready shares
Plunged in the glebe; to lead point blank his way,
Each rival for a distant poplar bears,
No arc disfigures the unwavering line,
The sun each ridge approves with golden shine.

46.

"O God of victory!" the crowds exclaim,
"Good chief, thy furrow is a pretty cast,
And tells of one who justifies his fame,
Yet, say we all, this other's not o'erpassed,
His of a truth might be a bowman's guide,
Down which to wing his shaft, nor graze the side."

47.

Thus won Le Marran. Not less did he throw
Amid the council his most bitter word,
Who thus harangued his hearers, pale and slow:
"Whistling I worked the soil that stiffer stirred
Than wont—my debt of labour full to pay,
I'd make for lengthened work a lengthened day.

48.

"Sudden my beasts stand still with bristled hide,
At once their tremor and affright I see,
The pointed ear and palpitating side;
Then wells a strange delirium o'er me,
Spins round each object doubled to my sight,
And the herbs droop discoloured as with blight.

49.

"I touch my beasts—my trusty La Bayarde 9
Looks sadly on me back and moveth not,
Falet the furrow snuffs—I urge them hard
With lash o'er ham and haunch, they bound like shot
From gun well charged, the ashen shafts are broke,
Off, off, they scour with coulter and with yoke.

50.

"I, wan, and cramped with sudden palsy, stand,
While uncontrolled convulsions shake my limbs,
My jaws I grind—awe cripples heart and hand,
And my flesh trembles to my brain that swims,
While o'er my head like thistles grim and grey,
Death flaps his wings and passes on his way."

51.

"Mother of God!" the frightened parent cried,
"My beauteous child with thy soft mantle shield!"
Then on her knees, as lorn of hope, she sighed,
And heavenward gazing to its grace appealed;
Then rushed the old Antelme with giant strides,
Who o'er the milkers as their chief presides.

52.

"And why so early was the child agate
Haunting the dew-dank copses?" Forth he tolled
His words, and sped to where the council sate;
"For milking had we barely climbed the fold,
The stars that lit the flinty plain on high
Studded like nails with golden heads the sky;

53.

"A wraith, a filmy spirit skirts the park,
The noiseless steps the dogs to silence daunt,
Close pack the flocks, 'Art thou of holy mark,
Speak, spirit, or if damned to hell avaunt!'
Thus thought I, nor, O master could I dare
To our good Lady e'en to frame a prayer.

54.

"'To the blessed Maries' breathed a voice well known,
'And 'mongst you shepherds goeth none with me?'
Straight had the vision o'er the moorland flown,
But, master, gird thy faith, I warrant thee,
It was Mirelle." Of the sad conclave each
Demands, but dreads, assurance of his speech.

55.

"Yea, 'twas Mirelle," he cried, "my light the stars,
I saw before me flit the airy child;
What woe her ever happy aspect mars?
Where once was all so blythe, why now so wild?
To fly thus frantic to her distant goal,
Some inborn tempest lashes sure her soul."

56.

The sturdy labourers smote their horny palms,
Groaning the while—the fatal tale complete,
"Ye lads," the impatient mother cried, "your arms
Shall haste me to the Holy Maries' seat,
Run she, or fly, my birdlet I'll regain,
My soft young partridge of the flinty plain.

57.

"Should the barbed ants attack her, to the last,
My teeth shall grind them, nest and ants, to nought;
If grim and greedy death thy lot forecast,
Ere on thee, loved one, is his havock wrought,
His scythe in twain shall wrench this strengthened hand,
While thou fly'st free and scatheless o'er the land."

58.

Thus as she paced beneath the Cornel trees,
Jeanne Marie sowed her lamentations round,
"Carter bring forth the car—the axle grease,
The fellies moisten—see that all work sound,
Harness Mourette," they hear the old man say,
Disturbed, "The day is short and long the way."

59.

Now mounts Jeanne Marie on the echoing wain,
While deeper sighs but tell of rising fear;
"Cray with thy stony consequence of plain,
Ye regions vast of salten atmosphere,
Your powerful mercies to my pearl extend,
And be, benignant sun, her sorrow's friend.

60.

"But thou, Tavène, thou execrable quean,
Who didst my darling to thy hovel lure
Her tender sense from innocence to wean,
With poison-charms, and sorceries impure,
May all the fiends St. Anthony o'erthrew
Trail thee 'cross Baux and crush thee with thy crew."

61.

Whilst the car's rattle o'er the flinty track
Her sighs outmasters, slow each thoughtful hind
To toil returns, but looks each moment back,
Yet from the desert space no hope can find;
In painted swarms beneath the bowered trees
The careless insects gambol in the breeze.

NOTES ON CANTO IX.

Note 1, stanza 2, line 3.

"Hastening the ripening of their sorrow sate." The original word to which the French translation, or rather explanation, "nourissent leur douleur" has been given, is coudoun, which signifies figuratively a great grief, or heavy weight on the heart, literally a quince, coing. This word in the latter sense is derived from the Greek κυδώνιον, a fruit of Cydon, in the former from κότος, profound resentment.

Note 2, stanza 4, line 4.

"Of eggs and fare for grand-boire." Grand-boire, a slight meal which the harvest people take at about ten o'clock in the morning.

Note 3, stanza 13, line 4.

"That plant that Althen's name with honour wings." The madder. John Althen, an Armenian adventurer, who, in the year 1774, introduced the cultivation of madder into the county of Venaissin. A statue was erected to him in 1850, on the rock of Avignon.

Note 4, stanza 14, line 1.

"He sees the fallows star-lit with the glare
Of aureole herb."

Dans les guérets étoilés d'aurioles. The *centaurea solstitialis*, yellow star the thistle, a plant which multiplies in the stubble after harvest. Its yellow flowers, with the starlike spikes of their *involucre*, have gained it its Provençal name, auriolo, signifying aureole.

Note 5, stanza 20, line 3.

"When Simon led, behind the bloody car
Of holy legate, the crusade of France."

[Pope Innocent, having failed hitherto in his attempts to suppress the Albigenses, sent, in 1209, in conjunction with Louis VIII., a formidable army of crusaders against them. The principal director of this war was Arnold, Abbot of the Cistercians, and legate of the Pope, and the commander-in-chief was Simon de Montfort. Raymond VI., Count of Toulouse, had been solemnly excommunicated for his encouragement of the heretics, and the expedition was directed against him. He at first, to avoid the ecclesiastical malediction, forsook the Albigenses and joined the crusaders, but as fear had occasioned his apostacy, a similar motive induced his return to the friends he had deserted. Simon de Montfort was actuated, not so much by a zeal for religion as by a desire to obtain for himself the count's possessions. After many battles, sieges, and other exploits conducted with the most intrepid courage, and the most abominable barbarity, Simon received from the Pope, in 1215, the county of Toulouse, and other possessions of Raymond, whom he had defeated. This unfortunate prince had to submit to being scourged with rods, in presence of the legate. His possessions were regained by his successor from the son of Simon, and, he having no male heir, they passed to Alphonso, Count of Poitiers, son of Louis VIII., who married his daughter. This prince dying without issue, they became united to the crown of France. The siege of Beaucaire was one of the most sanguinary and decisive events in the war of the Albigenses.]

Note 6, stanza 31, line 1.

"Laurence of Goult stood forth." Goult or Agoult, a town in the department of Vaucluse, which gives its name to one of the most illustrious houses of Provence.

Note 7, stanza 35, line 5.

"Of Tarascon, and knight of la Tarasque." All the world has heard of the Tarasque, a monster, which, according to the tradition, ravaged the banks of the Rhone, and was subjugated by St. Martha. Every year the people of Tarascon celebrate their deliverance by the public exhibition of an effigy of the monster, which men bear running through the streets; and on occasions more or less frequent, this festival is extended to a succession of games. Those of the javelin and flag (pique et drapeau), mentioned in the poem, consist in throwing up gracefully, and to a great height, and in skilfully re-catching, a standard, with broad folds, or a javelin. Lagadigadèu is the celebrated refrain of a popular

song attributed to King René, which is sung at Tarascon during this fête. The following verse is the best known :—

Lagadigadèu !
La Tarasco !
Lagadigadèu !
La Tarasco
De Castèu !
Leissas-la passa,
La vieio masco !
Leissas-la passa
Che vai dansa.

Some etymologists derive the word Tarasque and its derivative Tarascon, from *ταράσσω*, to harass.

[Millin gives the following particulars of the Tarasque :—"A clumsy figure, representing la Tarasque, is paraded through the town on Whit-Monday and St. Martha's day. The figure is made of wood, and represents a dragon. The body is formed of hoops and covered with painted canvas, and on its back is a buckler bristling with pointed horns ; this buckler has some resemblance to the shell of the turtle, which has given rise to the suggestion that the Tarasque had its origin in the capture of a large turtle, which had got entangled in the mouths of the Rhone, and was taken at Tarascon, but this buckler is not found on the seals which bear the most ancient effigy of the Tarasque, where it appears simply as a dragon. On the sides of this monstrous figure are handles, placed at equal distances, to assist in its carrying.

It is on Whit-Monday that the Tarasque is carried through the town, eight skilful and strong young men are entrusted with this duty ; they wear white shoes and stockings, their heads are dressed with a muslin cap, and they bear on their breasts a shield with the figure of the animal. They carry the Tarasque at the height of their waists, and so direct its movements as to express rage and fury. At one time they run rapidly, at another they stop, then they turn round suddenly, crying out "Voulen mai nostro tarasco" (We wish again for our tarasco). To increase the terror which this monster should inspire, as he figures in this commemorative festival, a man placed inside the animal's body makes him vomit fireworks through his eyes and mouth.

Those whom curiosity draws too near, often meet with severe bruises : the people of Tarascon appear enchanted with the prowess of their monster ; far from being moved by the cries of the wounded, they oblige them to jump about, and the crowd, full of rejoicing, make the air resound with their acclamations, "A qua ben fé ! A qua ben fé !" "La Tarascon a rou un bré !" (Well done, well done ; the Tarasque has broken his arm.) The incautious, and strangers who are ignorant of this custom, run the risk of losing their lives ; many people have been killed ; the procession is never unattended by some accident.

On St. Martha's day the Tarasque plays a different part: it is made to take part in the religious procession, and a young girl, dressed in white, leads it by a white ribbon, as formerly the saint, whom they worship, led it in chains into Tarascon. When the procession enters the church, it is presented at the gate of the choir; a priest sprinkles it with holy water, the animal makes several convulsive movements and falls on its side].

Note 8, stanza 36, line 5.

"With such neat grace and skill in Condamine." Condamine—La Condamine *(Campus Domini)*, a quarter of Tarascon. This name is found in several towns of the south.

Note 9, stanza 49, line 1.

"I touch my beasts—my trusty La Bayarde
Looks sadly on me back."

La Bayarde, name of a horse or mule. In country districts, beasts of burden are generally named after their colour. The most common names are blanquet, white—momet, black—brumeù, brown—falet, grey—baiard, bay—roubin, chestnut.

CANTO X.

CAMARGUE.

Mirelle crosses the Rhone in Andrelon's skiff and pursues her journey across Camargue—Description of Camargue—The heat—The mirage—The downs—The Sansouires—Mirelle is sun-struck on the banks of the pool of Vaccarés—The musquitoes recall her to life—The pilgrimess of love drags herself to the church of the Holy Maries—Prayer—The vision—Discourse of the Holy Maries: vanity of this world's happiness, necessity and merit of suffering—The saints to restore the courage of Mirelle recite to her their earthly trials.

I.

List, men of Provence, all from Arles to Vence; [1]
If the great sun your fainting way arrest,
Come, friends, we'll camp and rest us where Durance [2]
Hath all her streams with willow curtains dressed;
Let every tongue from Aix to Valensole, [3]
Sing Mirelle's love, and Vincent's bitter dole.

2.

Like stroke of fish the shallop cleft the wave,
Her eager pilot the small Andrelon,
For she, whose love my song its essence gave,
Alone with him had dared the depths of Rhone;
Pensive she sat, as one in boding dream,
Far off her heart, her eyes were in the stream.

3.

Then spoke the childish oarsman, "See, how vast,
Rhone lies upon his old gigantic bed,
And fights midst Cray and Camargue with the blast,
Camargue yon island's name, thou beauteous maid,
So far it spreads, it sees the waters fleet
With seven great mouths the expectant ocean greet."

4.

And as he spoke a dim reflection drooped
From morning's blushes on the river's breast,
Up the broad stream the stately tartanes trooped,
The soft sea breezes temperately pressed
The lithe white sails, and gently urged the share,
As shepherdess her snowy lambs, with care.

5.

Ye stately shades, where ash with giant arm,
And poplar, brilliant with its silver mast,
Entuft the shores, while with fantastic charm [passed,
Wild vines, their quaint gnarled trunks around them
With closing tendrils branch and twig caress,
Their clusters curled below like maiden's tress;

6.

And Rhone, his waters with their course nigh spent,
Flows in the tranquil majesty of age;
O'er Avignon, its games and merriment,
Like one who chafes in life's last tottering stage,
He sighed perforce and lingered ere he gave
His name and waters to their ocean grave.

7.

But she who prompts my insufficient song,
The loving maid, had bounded on the shore;
"Walk," said her boy preceptor, "straight and long
As the worn track befriends, what guidance more
Thou want'st, the saints proportion to thy need;"
He spake, slung round, and plied his oars with speed.

8.

While June hurled down a furnace with each ray,
On, ever on, like lightning flew Mirelle;
North, south, or where is nursed or rests the day,
Nought on her sight but one vast desert fell,
Its sole confine some distant glare of sea;
Save stunted tamarisks, nor bush, nor tree;

9.

Salt-wort, sea-poppy, bitter herbs and rank,
From the sour earth a growth pernicious drew;
Then saw she salt savannahs, where, with flank
Of raven sheen, the bulls, white steeds, that knew
Nor bit, nor spur, the quick'ning air confessed,
That breathes the ocean from her briny chest.

10.

The azure vault, the pathway of the sun,
The land with span of nobler grasp embraced,
And with great outburst of effulgence shone;
A lonely seamew specked the airy waste,
Or huge-winged bird cast down a flitting noon,
Some stalking hermit of the near lagoon;

11.

Mayhap some red-legged stork, bold cavalier, [5]
Or testy heron, who, when war he threats, [6]
His snowy crest of triple plume will rear;
Meanwhile the sun poured down his blazing jets,
From her slim waist Mirelle her scarf withdrew,
That her soft breast the breeze might rise to woo.

12.

Yet raged the truculence of heat more dire,
And bronzed the air; the sun, his zenith pure
Mounting, rained down a sea of dripping fire,
Of furnace glow, and red intemperature;
Thus Nubian lion, in his hunger's lust,
With flaming eyes devours the burning dust.

13.

Beneath a beech, (but why of shade so scant?)
The sun-bleached radiance twinkled like the flight
Of buzzing swarms—the gadfly or the ant,
A wingèd plague, or wasp with gold bedight—
With fiery motes the air refulgent made,
As sparks that quiver from the whetted blade.

14.

Panting, foot sore, confounded with distress,
The golden spear whereon her shame relied,
To guard its lawn, drew forth love's pilgrimess;
As with twin wavelets on a summer's tide,
Her bosom surged to view, fair, soft as dove's,
Or the white bellwort that the ocean loves.7

15.

A brighter land advanced her steps to greet,
First dimly glimmering, then but scantly seen;
Next with cool promise as to salve her feet,
A lake appeared, its shores with purslain green,
Their calm the cone-shaped phillyreas lent,
And with the far perspective softly blent.

16.

Of heavenly mark uprose a promised land;
On the far margin of the azure mere
A stately city lay—along the strand
Were shades of alleyed boulevards; in their rear
Ramparts and churches, fountains, turrets high,
And slim belled steeples struggling to the sky.

17.

A navy, borne on pinions of snow,
Her haven made, cool Zephyrs minist'ring,
Her flags and pennons flickering o'er the prow,
Gold-voiced the helmsman drove to anchoring;
On her hot forehead gently pressed Mirelle
Her velvet hand, her wilderment to quell.

18.

It was a scene where miracle was writ
In holy type—the maiden swifter sped,
For the blessed Maries here was temple fit;
But as she ran, so fast the vision fled;
While distance showed its imagery more bright,
And her spent feet obeyed her dazzled sight.

19.

A wispy fabric, 'twas of goblins weft,[8]
The woof was sunbeams, and the warp thin air;
Coloured as evening clouds fantastic cleft
Of forms unnumbered—and to disrepair
The structure trembles, mist-like melts away,
Mirelle stands awed beneath the murderous ray.

20.

Before her lies the boundless sandy space
And drear Saharas glazed with salten crust,
Sun-blistered deserts burned to noxious glaze,
Save where the sun had cracked the scorious dust,
O'er rank marsh herbs of growth of giant wrong
The venomed insects drone their deadly song.

21.

With thought of Vincent in her heart at nest,
Long time she skirts Vaccarés lengthening shore;
Long time, aye long, the temple of the blessed
And holy Maries sees she as before
Her steps in swelling majesty it nears,
As ship white-winged that 'fore the breeze careers.

22.

But as she gazes, sudden on her brow
Hurls his whole rage the unrelenting sun;
Reels the drear damsel 'neath the Titan blow,
And drops before the force she cannot shun,
Then sinks death-struck the placid sea beside; [pride.
Mourn, Cray, thy flower—weep, youths, your maiden

23.

Beside a streamlet, in a peaceful vale,
A troop of harmless doves a hunter sees,
That smooth their breasts, and in the shade regale,
His wanton aim from 'hind the stealthy trees
Of the fair troop the fairest bodes to die;
Why, sun, didst thou his dainty spite outvie?

24.

So lies the maid as on her sandy bier,
Musquito hosts perchance towards her fly;
Her throat's convulsive quiverings they hear,
And see her white breast's gasping agony;
Nor 'gainst the untiring sun's recoiling ray
E'en spreads the juniper a friendly spray.

25.

Thus plaintive harp upon their slender wings,
And tender hum these children of the air:
"Wake, wake, thou pretty one, for salten springs
Here rise death-laden to the accomplice glare;"
Each her sunk head with warning torture spears
What time the sea sheds forth a mist of tears,

26.

Whose pungent dew excites her burning cheek;
Slowly with pain she lifts her from her trance,
Her moans and cries her tortured brain bespeak,
As painfully her trailing steps advance,
O'er the salt herbs they totter, but divine
Where dwell the Maries in their saintly shrine.

27.

Tear-dewed her sunken lids, the damsel falls,
Her young head echoing 'gainst the sacred floor,
Stone-slabbed so hard, and from the briny walls
With slippery damp bedewed unkindly o'er;
Yet on the breeze's wing her prayer is sent
To spheres beyond the starry firmament.

I.

"Ye holy Maries, who our tears
Can change to flowers, bow down your ears,
And make thanksgivings of my fears.

II.

"When all my conflicts ye shall see,
My woe, alas! and agony,
All gracious, ye will shelter me.

III.

"A maiden I who love too well,
The beauteous Vincent wrought my spell;
My love, ye saints, no power can quell.

IV.

"I love him, love him, as the rill
Loves to trip sparkling down the hill,
Or bird new fledged to try his quill.

V.

"They bid me quench the deathless power
Of cherished fire, and bid deflower
The almond tree in blossomed hour.

VI.

"Ye holy Maries, who our tears,
Can change to flowers, bow down your ears,
And make thanksgivings of my fears.

VII.

"From far I've toiled your peace to quest,
My steps not Cray, nor wilds unblest,
Nor anguished mother, could arrest.

VIII.

"Albeit within my brain I feel,
Like showers of thorns or barbèd steel,
The rays that rattle till I reel.

IX.

"Oh! give me Vincent! by my troth,
Gay, joyous as the rainbow moth,
We'll come and kneel before you both.

X.

"Then shall my temple's fires subside,
My cheek where now but tears abide,
With rapture glow beatified.

XI.

"My father lists not to my plaints,
But ye can work where nature faints,
And touch his heart, ye golden saints.

XII.

"Hard is the olive, yet the wind
Of Advent melloweth its rind
Till all within is ripe and kind.

XIII.

"The medlar and the winter pear,
First plucked, both green and acrid are,
Then, stored on herbs, are sweet and fair.[11]

XIV.

"Ye holy Maries, who our tears
Can change to flowers, bow down your ears,
And make thanksgivings of my fears.

XV.

"What visions daze my brain and eyes,
Rises the Church? Is't Paradise?
What layers of stars repeat the skies!

XVI.

"But blessing, blessed, the saints descend,
Through cloudless air, and Heaven's my friend;
With glory rayed they hither bend.

XVII.

"Do I, sweet guardians, you behold?
Cover your crown's too radiant gold,
Else shall I die your grace untold.

XVIII.

"Call ye? But oh! put on a veil
Of clouds, dear Saints; my eyeballs fail,
My powers before your glory quail."

28.

And in her holy ecstacy, Mirelle,
Panting, enraptured on the pavement knelt,
Forward were stretched her arms, while backward fell
Her head, impalpably her vision dwelled
Where past the veil of flesh the gates she sees,
The gates where holy Peter holds the keys.

29.

Her lips are marble mute—her beauteous face
Changed to celestial effigy is seen,
While soul and body float in heavenly space;—
Thus when Aurora tips with golden sheen
The poplar spires, a lamp grows gently dim
That some soul-stricken penitent doth trim.

30.

Their beauty passed from earthly to divine,
Three women forms from out the sky descend,
Stars countless, purest-rayed their transit line,
As flocks divide when night and peril end;
Pillars and groins in double ranks retreat,
And parts the vaulted roof the guests to greet.

31.

Thus through the limpid air from heavenly rest,
Glide the three Maries down enrobed in light;
A vase of alabaster 'gainst her breast
One holds—the star which suns the shepherd's night
Alone betrays her look of chastened grace,
And Paradise recovered in her face.

32.

One her fair tresses to the sport and balm
Of winds abandons, bashfully inclined,
In her white hand the reverential palm;
The last scarce yet from girlhood unconfined,
On her swarth brow a filmy fillet ties,
While diamonds sparkle from her orient eyes.

33.

Now o'er the weeping suppliant they bend,
And, motionless, her every sigh respire,
Then thus they speak in tones of angel friend,
With words as musical as seraph's lyre;
The martyr thorns which tortured erst Mirelle,
Burst into buds and into blossoms swell.

"Comfort thee, poor Mirelle, the Maries we,
Of Judah's land, oh! comfort thee," they said,
"We are Baux' guardian saints, then comfort thee;
And when the sea-tossed bark's most sore bested,
Our patron presence will the tempest charm,
And still the ocean to a mighty calm.

35.

"But lift thine eyes to where St. James is shrined,
There gathered we, as in the stars we viewed
The ranks of pilgrims through the passes wind,
The bands of holy hearts with faith endued,
Our son and nephew's tomb at Compostelle [12]
They sought their sins to own, and sorrows tell.

36.

"We gave their plaintive litanies our ear;
The plash of fountains and the steeple clang,
The droop of day, and scattered far and near
The pilgrim worshippers, all nature rang
The great Apostle's praise, his triumph won,
St. James the Great, our kinsman, nephew, son.

37.

"Well pleased to hear his glorious name confessed,
Each pilgrim's brow he sprinkled with the dew
Of earth's still eve, and in each joying breast
The peace of heavenly calm as manna threw,
'Twas then thy prayers like tongues of fire arose
And pierced the precincts of our blest repose.

38.

"Daughter, amidst the faithful art thou great,
Thy prayers oppress us—think'st thou at the fount
Of chastened love to drink, nor pass the gate
Of death, O foolish, to that life to mount,
Whose fulness joins us to the Great Supreme?
What earthly bliss provoked this heavenly dream?

39.

"Hast seen it in the rich man in his pride,
His triumphs worshipped, and his God forgot,
Who thrusts the modest wayfarer aside?
The leech when gorged with blood will fall and rot;
'Fore that great Judge shall wealth redeem His soul
Who entered Sion on an ass's foal?

40.

"Or hast thou found it in the mother wife,
Who to her new-born firstling at her breast,
Strains the first issues of the fount of life?
But 'tis as poisoned feast, and where's the guest?
The cradle veil she lifts dismayed to lay
Her burning kisses on her infant's clay.

41.

"Hast thou discerned it on the virgin's brow,
Who up the church path, decked in bridal wreath,
Leans on the youth who claims her maiden vow?
They tread the path, nor feel the thorns beneath,
Albeit more thick than those that fence the sloe;
Sure all on earth is weariness and woe.

42.

"Thou drink'st a draught from earth's most choicest spring;
But bitter, oh! 'tis bitter. With the peach
The worm is born, decay with every thing,
And inbred ruin; from thy basket reach
The fairest orange exquisite of skin,
Without it tempts, and turns to gall within.

43.

"Each respiration of thy life's a sigh,
Though sounding health. Who thirsteth for the spring
That's incorruptible, nor ever dry,
Whose water's price is paid with suffering?
To subtlest powder must the stone be ground
Ere in its heart the speck of gold is found.

44.

"Who lifts his brother's burden is the blessed,
Who chafes his spirit but with other's woe,
Nor sees a tear fall friendless—from his breast
The mantle rends to naked want to throw;
Who to the humble humbler opes his door,
And stirs his hearth to tempt the frozen poor.

45.

"Hear the great truth by all the word declined,
Death is the birth of life—thrice happy they
Who watch in peace and pureness—loving-kind,
Borne on the breath divine they'll pass away,
As lilies white, to where the just are throned,
And quit a world whose saints are daily stoned.

46.

"Could'st thou but see how vain to us appears,
From the empyréan heights, thy world, Mirelle,
How ripening hopes are washed away by tears,
And sense and mammon strive where love should dwell,
While the dread grave affrights your stumbling feet,
Poor lamb! for death and pardon would'st thou bleat.

47.

"But ere the grain can generate the blade,
It's law decrees it fester in the ground;
What bitter cups we drank to dregs ere rayed
With glory thus! But that thy faith abound,
Hear, as we journeyed to our starred abode,
The shocks and tribulations of the road."

48.

Awhile the holy three their chorus cease;
The waves caressing hurtle to the shore,
As flocks to fold—the pine groves whisper peace
To the far alders quivering on the moor;
The gulls and floating birds mute wonder fills,
As Vaccarés her world of water stills.

49.

And sun and moon, the wondrous tale to list,
Their crimson discs stoop o'er the vast champaign,
As worshippers 'fore Holy Eucharist;
Camargue starts watchful with his briny plain,
When thus begin, Mirelle's fond heart to guide
In unison the three Beatified.

NOTES ON CANTO X.

Note 1, stanza 1, line 1.

"List, men of Provence, all from Arles to Vence." Vence, a small town in the department of Var, close to Antibes, an ancient bishopric, now a station on the Marseilles and Nice railway.

Note 2, stanza 1, line 3.

"Where Durance
Hath all her streams with willow curtains dressed."

Durencolo, Provençal of Durance. This name is given to all the canals derived from the Durance.

Note 3, stanza 1, line 5.

"Let every tongue from Aix to Valensole." Valensole, a small town in the lower Alps. [It will be seen, on an examination of the map, how large a tract of country lies between these limits.]

Note 4, stanza 2, line 4.

["Alone with him had dared the depths of Rhone." The navigation of the mouths of the Rhone is never without danger; the changes of wind render the length of the passage uncertain, and during the great floods it is impracticable.]

Note 5, stanza 11, line 1.

"Mayhap some red-legged stork, bold cavalier." The word in Provençal, s cambet, which designates several birds of the genus *Ardea*, but particularly the small red-legged chevalier (*tringa gambetta*, Lin.), and the great red-legged chevalier (*scolopax calidrix*, Lin.).

Note 6, stanza 11, line 2.

"Or testy heron."

Ardea nycticorax, Lin.

Note 7, stanza 14, line 5.

"Or the white bellwort that the ocean loves." The campanula, which in summer displays its white blossoms on the sea shore.

[The author says he intends to designate the beautiful flower, called in Provence, ile de mar (*pancratium maritimum*, Lin.). This name is now applied to a genus of plants found in the equinoctial parts of both the old and new worlds, of which this one species extends to the shores of the Mediterranean.]

Note 8, stanza 19, line 1.

"A wispy fabric, 'twas of goblins weft." Le fantastique, also called esprit fantasti, follet, a goblin whose nature is manifested by his mischievous actions (see canto vi. stanza 41 and following).

[The frequency of the mirage, attributed to the insufferable heat of La Crau, is remarked by all writers who have described this country. The author has here gracefully blended with it the wonderful phenomenon, the fata morgana, observable at times in the sea at Reggio, opposite Messina, in Sicily. The effect of the ordinary mirage is confined to the illusive representation of water.]

Note 9, stanza 20, line 2.

"And drear Saharas glazed with salten crust." See note 3 to canto 1.

Note 10, stanza 24, line 6.

"E'en spreads the juniper a friendly spray." Morven, or juniper of Phœnicia.

Note 11, Mirelle's Prayer, stanza xiii.

["Stored on herbs, are sweet and fair." The medlar, and fruit of the service tree (*cornes*), for which I have substituted the winter pear, are laid on straw to become ripe and mellow.]

Note 12, stanza 35, line 5.

["Our son and nephew's tomb at Compostelle." Compostelle, the capital of Galicia. The cathedral is very magnificent, and the object of the most important pilgrimage in Spain. The crypt is dedicated to the national patron, Saint James the Less, the upper part to Saint James the Elder.]

CANTO XI.

THE SAINTS.

The Holy Maries relate how, after the death of Christ, being delivered over, with several other disciples, to the mercy of the waves, and landed in Provence, they converted the people of that country—The voyage—The storm—Arrival of the proscribed Saints at Arles—Arles in the days of the Romans—The festival of Venus—Preaching of St. Trophimus—Conversion of the Arlesians—The people of Tarascon come to implore the succour of St. Martha—The Tarasque—St. Martha at Limoges—St. Saturnin at Toulouse—St. Eutropius at Orange—St. Martha overcomes the Tarasque, and afterwards converts Avignon—The papacy at Avignon—St. Lazarus at Marseilles—St. Magdalene in the grotto—St. Maximin at Aix—The Maries at Baux—King René—Provence united to France—Mirelle, virgin and martyr.

I.

"STILL stood on guilty Judah's hill, Mirelle,
The cross in fateful substance, while it wept
Great tears of blood, that from the Anointed fell;
To the lost city that beneath it slept,
It cried, 'O desolate Jerusalem,
Where, say, oh! where's the King of Bethlehem?'

2.

"The murder uproar that had filled her streets
Was hush'd by night—a comfortless lament
Was from far Cedron heard—to deep retreats
His shrunken stream in shame sad Jordan bent,
'Neath the dim lentisk and the cedars' gloom,
To make himself awhile a living tomb.

3.

"And mourned the poor—to them 'twas given to know
Who rolled the sealed sepulchral stone away;
Clothed in His risen majesty to go
To kinsman, friends, disciples in dismay;
The promised keys to Peter to confide,
And like young eagle to the sky to glide.

4.

"Ah! in Judea fondly was bemoaned
The fair-haired carpenter of Galilee;
His parables more sweet than honey owned
Their softened hearts—the multitudes they see
With bread unleavened on the mountain fed,
The lepers touched, and called to life the dead.

5.

"Then murmured doctors of the law, and kings,
With priests and all the tribe depraved of gain,
Whom from the Temple, with their unclean things,
The Lord drove forth. 'Who Sion shall restrain,
Or o'er Samaria a shackle toss,
If none shall quench this lustre of the Cross?'

6.

"Then raged the nations, and the martyrs bled;
On Stephen first with stones the murderers rushed,
James, the Lord's brother, with the sword lay dead,
To powder others 'neath the rock were crushed;
'Fore fire or sword, in exultation loud,
Each God's Messias in his Lord avowed.

7.

"We whom our Lord to brotherhood had sealed,
Or who His footsteps sistered through the land,
To stem the unknown sea our homes must yield,
And oarless, sailless, tear us from the strand;
Bitter the tears for us the women shed,
And men their suppliant hands to Heaven outspread.

8.

" E'en now the olive groves in distance shrank,
With tower and palace—the deep fissured crest
Of Carmel dim stood up, the horizon sank
To dwarfage—sudden pierced each solemn breast
A cry that called us to the shore again;
There stood, her arms beseeching o'er the main,

9.

" A damsel—thus we heard her far-off voice:
'Sweet mistresses, oh! bid me share your way;
I, too, for him in torture would rejoice,
And bitterest death.' Thus did our handmaid pray,
That Sara, who, her crown of glory won,
In Heaven thou seest soft-rayed as April sun.

10.

" 'Fore the north wind we drove, when Salomé,
Some holy inspiration in her soul,
Cast her light veil upon the fair blue sea,
And felt (O faith) the waves beneath her roll;
On her frail raft upborne, our bark as frail
The virgin neared, as Heaven ordained the gale;

11.

" For Heaven's wind bore her, and her veil sustained;
As in a mid-day twilight languidly
The mountain tops in sad succession waned,
And as the land declined, and rose the sea,
He that hath loved and lost some holy land
May paint the anguish of our pilgrim band.

12.

" Farewell, Judea, Holy Land, adieu,
Who, doomed to woe, did'st crucify thy Lord,
And all thy just ones to the death pursue;
Thy vines and dates shall be by lions gnawed,
Thy walls shall deadly serpents make their cell;
Farewell, thou loved lost land, oh! fare thee well.

13.

" A mighty wind, that shook her stern to bow,
Flung through the tumbling waves our staggering boat;
Knelt Saturnine and Martial in the prow,
And aged Trophimus drew close his coat,
With Holy Maximin elect to bear
The golden mitre on his silver hair.

14.

" Erect on deck was Lazarus the good;
In mortal pallor of the shroud and grave,
Who o'er the reeling whirlpool dauntless stood.
And Martha, whom the shattered bark must save,
And from her kind apart, with dripping hair,
The Penitent of Magdala was there.

15.

" The demon-driven ship Eutropius bore,
And Joseph, who the virgin tomb forecast,
Sidonia, Cleon, men of holy lore,
Marcellus, too, these, clinging round the mast,
Over the stilling ocean anthems sang,
Whereto, 'We praise Thee, Lord,' our chorus rang.

16.

" Oh! o'er what sparkling waves rejoicing tripped
Our bark—yet oft there weltered to our sight
Ocean's rude breast by rending cyclones ripped,
Or spiral eddies oped its deepest night;
Then in light columns mounts the silver spray,
To pass like flitting spirit swift away.

17.

"In sea arose, in sea lay down the sun,
And as we rode the boundless briny main,
To the wind's will alone our course was run—
God through the rocks and perils of the main
His servants led, whom He ordained of old
To lead His sheep of Provence to the fold.

18.

"One dawn with promise was past measure fair,
With lamp in hand we saw spent night retire,
As widow who, with more than morning care,
Her loaves to bake, hath fanned the early fire;
Smooth as the floor 'fore thresher, ocean slept,
Nor up the keel a curling ripple crept.

19.

"From the horizon's depths a murmur came, [howled;
That threatened, groaned, and, swelled to tempest,
It pierced our marrow keen as sword or flame,
We shook as if a roaring lion prowled;
Stood still each lip, while worked each eye to find
What new assault defied us in the wind.

20.

"And o'er the sea, that cowered with affright,
Rolled back the storm new freighted with despair,
The waves lay prostrate; and, as one in sight
Of mortal change, the ship lay palsied there;
Sudden afar we see from ocean rise,
Upreared, a water mountain to the skies;

21.

"Crowned with a jetty diadem of cloud
The gathered waters, bellowing on their way,
O'erwhelmed us straight—O gracious God, how loud
Their legions howled! In ocean's pit we lay,
Then tossed on summit wave (thus ordereth
The sea's great Lord), we taste the pangs of death.

22.

"Oh! then what anguish of the fainting soul!
The dead dull air long-bladed lightnings cleft,
And cut jagged pathways for the thunder's roll;
Hell's hosts unchained, their watch impatient kept
To gulp our ship—Euroclydon his hoards
Drove forth to fling us mangled on the boards.

23.

"Now hoisted on the tressle waves we rise,
Now topple where the deep's fell monsters stray,
Hideous in form, and horrible in size,
And sharks whose triple tooth ne'er quits its prey,
Where the wan drowned 'mid ceaseless moans abide,
For ever lashed and harried by the tide.

24.

"Then all seemed death, as o'er our heads there rolled
A world of wave; thus Lazarus besought,
'Be thou our helm, Thou saving Lord, behold
Me whose redemption from the grave thou'st wrought.'
Our ship heels o'er. As dove that upward flies,
Sundered his prayer the storm, and pierced the skies.

25.

"Looked down the ascended Saviour from His seat,
And saw defeated Death again assail
His friend—He saw a watery winding sheet
Woven for each and fashioned by the gale,
As o'er our strait His smile of mercy beamed,
A flood of sunshine through the tempest streamed.

26.

"Ho, Halleluia! up the bitter sea
Once yet we're tossed, and down yet once are cast,
Then burst our hearts with shouts of jubilee,
As now the bitterness of death were past;
The swell sinks hushed, the severed clouds disclose
The land that beckons to a green repose.

27.

"Yet long with booming shocks the waves we strike,
As to our fragile bark they leap and curl,
Blessed by the breeze, that calms and aids alike;
Like bird that cuts the lake with breast of pearl,[1]
The harmless waves through rocks and shoals we plough,
And toss a spray of foam flakes from the prow.

28.

"Now, Halleluia! on a reefless shore,
The ship's at rest. We, prostrate on the sand,
Our Lord Deliverer with vows adore, [hand,
'O Christ, those lives o'er which thou'st stretched Thine
Though o'er our heads a two-edged sword should flame,
Are Thine henceforth to plant Thy law and name.'

29.

"The name of joy throughout her fair domain
Provence acknowledged palpably inspired;
The groves exulted, smiled the enlightened plain,
Nature with knowledge to the quick was fired;
So the glad dog his long-lost master viewed,
Before him bounds and skips his gratitude.

30.

"High on the beach are dainty shellfish cast,
O, Pater Noster, qui in cœlis es,
Thou still'st our hunger with a choice repast,
And wak'st a fountain 'midst salacious trees,
That yet its streams miraculous upthrows,
Where in Thy Holy House our bones repose.

31.

"Straightway, with faith inflamed, the banks we took
Of Rhone, an unpremeditated way;
From mead to mead we paced, from brook to brook,
And saw with joy where plough-traced furrows lay;
Far off rose Arles with battlement and tower,
And ensign proud of Rome's imperial power.

32.

"Then wast thou, Arles, in harvest vesture girt,
Dreaming amidst thy sheaves of glories old,
In days when thou the queendom could'st assert,
And motherhood of mariners as bold
As e'er bent oar; whose fleet of harboured masts
Threw back the onslaught of the roaring blasts.

33.

"Rome then redressed thee in a marble robe,
Twice sixty gates thy vast arenas faced;
First Princess of the Ruler of the globe,[2]
Thou had'st to pamper thy capricious taste,
Thy circus, pomp of aqueducts, and home
Of Thespian rites, and gorgeous hippodrome.

34.

"The city entered, with a rushing train
We're borne within the theatre's vast space,
And in the palace, pillared as a fane
Of sacred faith, contend the populace
Each vantage spot, so, when the clouds cascade,
The rustics jostle to the maple shade.

35.

"Oh! curse and shame, to notes of wilful lyre,
On the raised scene a flight of damsels twirled,
Barebreasted, while they chanted in a choir
Of ringing voices, strains to damn a world;
In sensual dance they spun with lewd delight,
Around a block of marble 'Venus' hight. 3

36.

"The maddened crowd in wild applauses broke,
Young men and maidens cried unholily:
'A psalm to Venus, hymn we her who spoke,
And nature leaped with universal glee;
To Venus, goddess, mother of mankind,
But chief to us the men of Arles inclined.'

37.

"With lofty brow, and nostril wide dilate,
The idol, myrtle-crowned amidst a cloud
Of incense, seemed with pride exaggerate;
When torn in spirit, o'er the revelling crowd
Of dancers, called the aged Trophimus, 4
Who, with uplifted hands, adjured them thus:

38.

"'Ye men of Arles, oh! give my wisdom ear,
In Christ's great name I call.' No more he spake.
'Fore his stern brow, the idol, struck with fear,
Tottered, and into groans heart-sunken brake,
From her proud pedestal then toppled o'er;
O'erthrown the dancing damsels strewed the floor.

39.

"Then all together raged with savage cry,
Each columned portal blocked a struggling host,
Dread rumours shook the streets and shouts the sky,
Away their crowns the proud patricians tossed;
The young men round us thronging, 'Vengeance!' screamed,
And o'er our heads a thousand poniards gleamed.

40.

"Howbeit our humble garb, with brine beflecked,
And Trophimus with aspect calm, and bright
With glory, such as armours God's elect,
And fairer than their fallen Aphrodite,
Veiled in a cloud of tears, our Magdalene
Rebuked the murder of these cruel men.

41.

"Then Trophimus anew took up his word:
'Ye men of Arles, to life the ear incline,
Then hew me down. Ye've seen, as broken sherd,
Your god bow down before the name of mine;
Think not my voice the mighty work hath wrought;
What are we all, we men, but dust or nought?

42.

"'The God who flung your idol from its throne,
Owns no substantial temple on the hill,
Yet day and night see there but Him alone;
His hand, that shatters crime, will prayer fulfil,
Wherein did all things ere created lie,
The sea, the earth, the mountains, and the sky.

43.

"'Once saw He, looking from His mercy seat,
The cankerworm His heritage devour;
The poor drank tears, with bitter hate for meat,
And none to comfort. Robed in spurious power,
Vice at His altars taught—each sacred feast
The harlots thronged to tempt the willing priest.

44.

"'To cleanse this filth, and bruised mankind redeem,
Tied up and groaning 'neath the oppressor's rod,
He sent His Son, poor, naked, not a beam
Of golden glory testified the God;
In a pure Virgin's womb the Incarnate lay,
And in a manger saw the light of day.

45.

"'But men of Arles, repent, repent, we tell,
We, choice companions of His days and woes,
Those miracles that 'fore our eyes befell;
And where afar fair-watered Jordan flows,
In his white linen robe we've watched Him speed,
To cheer the ragged crowd and hunger feed.

46.

"'He bid us love as brethren, and abide
In peace; the Almighty Father He revealed,
The Great and Good. His kingdom magnified,
His heavenly kingdom, to the worldly sealed;
In vain the proud, the spoiler, seek His door,
That hails the child, the mourner, and the poor.

47.

"'To show His teaching true, He walked the sea,
The sick He healed with saving word or smile,
From the foul tomb He set the prisoner free
Yon Lazarus corruptiòn saw awhile,
And, summoned forth, unwound his stainless shroud;
But Judah's kings with hate and envy bowed,

48.

"'Bound Him, and drove Him up the Hill of Blood,
And to a tree, with misery wasted, nailed;
In His blessed face they spat their loathsome flood,
And, as they raised Him in the air, assailed
His love with scoffings:' 'Pardon, pardon,' cried
The stricken crowd, and turned their sobs to hide.

49.

"'Say, holy herald, where doth mercy dwell?
Teach us the Father's angered arm to stay;
If blood of slaughtered victims please Him well,
His wrath shall hundred hecatombs allay.'
'Strangle your sins, and sacrifice your lust,'
He said, and humbly bent him in the dust.

50.

" 'No Lord, no pleasure doth Thy glory take
In fatted beasts, or temples built of stone;
Thou lov'st what morsel from our loaf we break
To feed the hungry, or, before Thy throne
Their chastity, that anxious damsels lay,
An incense sweet as opening buds of May.'

51.

" Thus from the lips of God's Apostle welled
The words of life as consecrated oil;
Tears burned each cheek, with sobs each bosom swelled,
And his skirt kissed each stricken son of toil;
The idols, bowing from the pillared height,
Rolled down the temple stairs in broken flight.

52.

" But that no cloud o'er truth unwitnessed rise,
Blind-born Sidonia in warrant gave
His God-anointed full-illumined eyes;
While Maximin the Crucified, and grave
Whence rose his glory, and repentance taught;
The Holy Wave that day all Arles besought.

53.

"As swooping whirlwind drives the stubble flame,
So us God's Spirit mightily impelled;
Lo, ere we parted, supplicating came
Ambassadors who knelt, our vesture held,
And prayed us thus: 'Oh! leave not so to groan
In sin, poor men who ne'er your God have known;

54.

"'By your new oracles and marvels led,
In us before you kneels a land accursed;
For though we walk the earth, we walk as dead;
Our gods impure, for blood and life athirst,
A monster sent, through all our glades to roam,
Each nook to haunt, and desolate each home.

55.

"'With tail of dragon, eyes that flash with red
Of Cinnabar, and roaring lion's face,
His iron back with scales and mail o'erspread,
Six feet of man his hopeless victims chase;
In his rock den by Rhone a pile he makes
Of all his hunger spares or ravin takes.

56.

"'Their 'minished crews the fishermen bewail;
From day to wretched day, in Tarascon
Some childless mother tells her widow tale;'
Then to the loving peril Martha won
Cries, 'With Marcellus to your strait I fly,
So yearns my heart to lay your sorrow by.'

57.

"Then having lingered o'er our last embrace,
In hope of heavenly gathering we spread
Our holy emprize. Martial turned his face
To Limoges—Saturnin, to Toulouse wed,
Joyed in his bride—Eutropius, 'midst the weed
And pomp of Orange, cast the heavenly seed.

58.

"And whither thou, sweet Virgin? Martha straight
Armed with her cross and wand of holy dew,
The Tarasque seeks, unruffled and sedate,
Her face with awe the barbarous people view;
Each vantage height they crowd with countless lines,
Or top the summits of the rocking pines.

59.

" Sudden uproused and harried in his lair,
Upstarts the noisome monster, but in vain
He snorts and plunges. Martha, full of prayer,
A chain of moss beneath the blessed rain
Coils round his limbs, and leads him at her will;
The adoring folk rush down from tree and hill.

60.

" 'Who art thou?' cry they to the Christian maid;
'Art thou the huntress Dian, from the skies,
Or chaste Minerva, valiant to aid?'
'Nay, nay, I'm but God's handmaid,' she replies;
And forth conducts them on the unknown way;
Then kneel they with her and responsive pray.

61.

" Thus struck she with her virginal discourse
The rock of Avignon, and forth she willed
The wave of faith, at whose translucent source
Good Gregory drank, and holy Clement filled
His cup with life, what time abandoned Rome
Mourned seventy years her Pontiff's desert home.

62.

" Howbeit e'en now throughout Provence new born,
Rose hymns of praise that pleased the heavenly ear;
Who hath not seen when rain drops of the morn
Gem plant and tree, beneath the quick'ning cheer
The leaves exalt them, and the flowerets laugh?
So sped each heart the living stream to quaff.

63.

" Thou, proud Marsalia, who the sea dost view
With eye that nought can sever from the sight,
For whom, though adverse winds to tempest blew,
Thy dreams of gold would clothe thy walls in light,
How drooped that eye that Lazarus taught to know
Thy depth of darkness, and thy growth of woe.

64.

" In thine Huveaune created of the tears [6]
Of Magdalene, thou mad'st to silver sand
Thy slime 'fore God. Today amidst thy peers
Thine horn is raised, ere havoc waste thy land;
Think, through thine olive groves health-laden roll
The crystal weepings of that chastened soul.

65.

"Ye hills of Aix, of peaked and bossy crest,
Ye ancient junipers of dark Sambuque,7
Pines of Estrel, that coop the eagle's nest,
Cedars of Trévaresse, what rapture took
The vales, when holy Maximin passed through,
And raised the Cross—Oh! sing the tale anew.

66.

"But gaze into the distance, do'st behold
One in yon cavern's darkest depths, who prays,
While her white arms her shrinking breast enfold?
Alas! poor wretch, the sharp flints more than graze
Her knees, her only garb her loose fair hair,
And the wan moon lights palely her despair.

67.

"Before the grotto noiseless bend the trees,
Their throbbing hearts attendant angels still,
And through the crevice peer unseen, to seize
The tear that on the stones her eyes distil;
Eager the priceless gem they gather up,
And seal the treasure in a golden cup.

68.

"Enough, enough! O Magdalen, the air
That fans the forest thirty years hath borne
Thy Lord's forgiveness, and the rocks prepare
To weep thy weepings ever. Must thou mourn,
Thy guardian tears will snow down from above,
To fresh the pureness of each maiden's love.

69.

"But nought the grief that gnaweth at her breast
With comfort calms—not loving birds that build
In St. Pilon, and carol to be blessed;
Not angel's wings with airs of mercy filled,
That seven times daily o'er this earth's alarms
Bear gently up, and rock her in their arms.

70.

"Lord, be our homage seasoned to Thy grace,
That we, redeemed, eternally behold
Thy full accomplished splendour face to face;
We, exiled women in Thy love grown bold,
Thy poor handmaidens (so thou deign'st) have spread
Some beams of glory from Thy radiant head.

71.

"Ye hills of Baux, in Alps' cerulean dight,
Your peaks and crags shall bear, from age to age,
The record of our embassage of light,
Writ on your rocks' imperishable page;[8]
'Yond Camargue's isle, where watery plains expand,
Death eased our labours with a father's hand.

72.

"How soon what dies to memory too is dead!
So did our tombs in cold oblivion lie;
And Provence sang, while time in silence sped—
Durance in Rhone lays name and glory by;
Provence, by France adopted, in her breast
Resigns her name and nation to her rest.

73.

"Prayed her last king: 'Lead forth thy sister France,
To your great future from my monarch grave;
In your compacted majesty advance,
For she is beautiful as thou art brave;
Gloomy rebellion, as your day upsprings,
To shun your light, will speed his murky wings.'

74.

"This beauteous act achiev'd the good René; 9
Once as he slumbered on his kingly down,
His dream we led to where our ashes lay;
Twelve bishops, all the glory of his crown,
His court, and pomp he takes, and straight they stand,
Where 'mid the samphire sleep we 'neath the sand.

75.

"Adieu, Mirelle. Time beckons us to see
How thy life trembles as the faltering flame
Of dying lamp, and quivers to be free.
But ere the soul escape its earthly frame,
Sisters, heaven calls aloud—arise, arise,
And be her swift forerunners to the skies.

76.

"Prepare we roses, and a robe of snow,
Her bloom to God love's Virgin Martyr yields,
Ye heavenly glades with brighter flowerage glow,
Inflame your lustre, empyréan fields,
To purest sheen, to justify Mirelle;
Praise we the powers divine—farewell, farewell."

†

NOTES ON CANTO XI.

Note 1, stanza 27, li 4.

"Like bird, that cuts the lake, with breast of pearl." The bird here intended is *podiceps cristatus* (Lin.), of the order of *Colymbidæ*.

Note 2, stanza 33, line 3.

["First Princess of the Ruler of the globe." In its present degraded state, it would be impossible to suppose the ancient grandeur of Arles, were it not sufficiently vouched for by its numerous astonishing monuments, which still exist, and on which many volumes have been written. I feel constrained to limit my notes to some of the objects or subjects touched upon in the text.

The theatre must have been of vast extent and splendour. It was surrounded by a piazza, composed of three rows of arches, standing one above another, and ornamented with a magnificent cornice.

The bases of the pillars of marble and granite, which may be seen in front of several houses in the town, or lying along the walls, or set upright at the corners of gates and streets, to act as supports, doubtless belonged to it, but the best idea of its magnificence is afforded by two enormous pillars, which are still standing in the ancient convent of La Miséricorde. The Venus of Arles, described in the following note, was found there, as have been several other statues, which form, with portions of carved cornices, pillars, and other remains of its architecture, sufficient evidence of the great richness of its decoration.

The remains of the Amphitheatre offer but small means of judging what it must have been. Its outer circumference may still be traced, but its seats have been demolished; its form was oval; it consisted of two stories, and four principal entrances. That to the north is in the best state of preservation; each story contained sixty arches; the capitals were Corinthian. The circumference was about 1,300 English feet; the height of the exterior walls at the entrance about 108 English feet; its greatest diameter about 460 English feet; the smallest about 212 English feet. It had 43 rows of seats, and is supposed to have been capable of holding 25,000 spectators.

This Amphitheatre is larger than that of Nîmes, but its proportions are less beautiful, and the exterior less magnificent.

It would be useless to attempt to include in a note, even a list, much less a description, however short, of the numerous buildings, such as the forum and others, of which remains still exist in Arles.]

Note 3, stanza 35, line 6.

["Around a block of marble, 'Venus' hight." The statue of Venus, known as the Venus of Arles, was discovered in 1651, in the site of the ancient theatre, in digging a well, near the two pillars mentioned in the preceding note. The head was first found, and its beauty was such as to make the possession of the entire statue an object of the greatest desire. The body and pedestal were afterwards discovered. Differences of opinion arose as to the name which should be given to the statue. Some learned men supposed it was Diana; others, Venus. In 1684 the inhabitants of Arles presented it to Louis XIV., and the controversy was submitted to the judgment of the king, who, in accordance with the opinions of Le Brun and Bouchardon, decided finally that it was a Venus. It was restored by Girardon, and placed in the gallery of Versailles. It remained there till the Revolution, after which it was transferred to the Musée Napoléon, and it is now in the Louvre.

The statue is naked to the waist, and draped below; the hair is bound with a riband, which falls back gracefully over the shoulder; the head is a model of grace and beauty. In restoring the arm, Girardon has placed a mirror in the left hand, and the apple in the right, but it is more probable that one hand held the helmet of Mars, and the other a spear. She is thus represented on the medals as Venus Victrix, and it is reasonable to suppose that the people of Arles, whose colony was called Juliana, would consecrate this image to the goddess, whom they looked upon as the original stock of the Julian family, into which Augustus had been adopted; and that it was executed at the time of this emperor. The statue is of that hard Greek marble of a somewhat ashen colour, which the Greek statuaries are supposed to have procured from Mount Hymettus near Athens. (Millin.)]

Note 4, stanza 37, line 5.

["The aged Trophimus." At Arles is the church of St. Trophimus, who has been already mentioned as one of the supposed Apostles of Christianity to the Gauls. Having come to Arles, he abolished the worship of idols and made many proselytes, who received the rite of baptism; he converted the Champs Elysées into a cemetery now called les Aliscamps. It was to him our Lord is said to have appeared, in order to bless this place, destined to the burial of the faithful, leaving on a stone the print of His knees. St. Trophimus built on the spot a chape to the Virgin.

He left Arles for a time to spread the faith in other towns of Gaul. He returned and was buried in the cemetery which he had gained for the christians. (See note to stanza 40, canto 1.)]

Note 5, stanza 60, line 2.

["Art thou the huntress Dian, from the skies?" Remains of altars and other tokens of the worship of Diana and Minerva have been discovered at Arles. The church of La Major, at Marseilles, is supposed to have been a temple of Diana; several remains of profane buildings were certainly used in its construction. Henri IV. carried away its beautiful pillars. The Comte di Tende carried off two others, as a present to his brother-in-law the Constable de Montmorenci. The mausoleum of Gasper de Vins at Aix, was also constructed of marble taken from this church.]

Note 6, stanza 64, line 1.

"In thine Huveaune, created of the tears
Of Magdalene."

Huveaune, a small river which rises at Ste. Beaume (Var) passes on to Aubagne, and runs into the sea at Marseilles, at the bottom of the Prads. A pious and poetic legend attributes its origin to the tears of St. Mary Magdalene.

Note 7, stanza 65, line 2, *et seq.*

Sambuque, a mountain to the east of Aix. Esterel, a mountain and forest in the department of Var. La Treverasse, a chain of mountains between the Touloubre, the Durance, and the Canal of Craponne.

Note 8, stanza 71, line 4.

"Writ on your rocks' imperishable page." La trace gravée dans la pierre. It has been seen in the history of the Holy Maries, that the bark of the prescribed saints landed at the extreme end of the Isle of Camargue. These first Apostles of the Gauls ascended the Rhone as far as Arles, and thence dispersed over the south. It it said that Joseph of Arimathea went to England. Such is the tradition of Arles. The tradition of Les Baux takes up and continues the Odyssey of the Holy Women—it says that they preached the faith in the Alpines, and that to perpetuate the memory of their preaching, they engraved in some miraculous manner, their effigies on a rock. This mysterious and ancient monument may still be seen to the south of the rock of Les Baux. It is an enormous detached block, standing upright on the slope of a precipice and cut to the shape of a needle. On the eastern side are sculptured three colossal figures, which are objects of veneration to the neighbouring people.

Note 9, stanza 74, line 1

["The good René." Though his name is so well known, the following tribute may serve to remind the reader of this good prince.

René d'Anjou, count of Provence, younger son of Louis II. king of the two Sicilies, was born in 1408. Never did prince fulfil his mission more nobly, or set a brighter example of honour and loftiness of mind. He made his great study the enlightenment of his subjects, as the best means of promoting their happiness: he founded colleges, and surrounded himself with men of learning; he encouraged in every way the arts and sciences, as well as agriculture, and made himself an example by his successful cultivation of painting and poetry. Besides "l'abuse en cour," a romance in verse and prose, he composed that of "Très doulce merci au cœur, d'amour épris et le traité d'entre l'âme dévote et le cœur." The life of René was devoted to the practice of every virtue, and the happiness of mankind was the object of all his labours; he was in consequence adored by his subjects, and the name of the "good king René," after being transmitted through so many generations, is still popular in Provence. A monument was erected to his memory in 1819 at Aix, where he died in 1480. He was father of several children—the duke of Calabria who perished in an expedition to Catalonia, the unfortunate Margaret of Anjou, Queen of England, and others. He bore with pious resignation the misfortunes of these children whom he loved tenderly, and after a life tried by much political disappointment, he died peacefully at the age of 72, carrying to his grave the blessings of his people. (*Encyclopédie des Gens du Monde*)]

CANTO XII.

DEATH.

The land of the orange—The saints reascend to Heaven—Arrival of the father and mother—The Saintins carry Mirelle to the upper chapel where the relics are deposited—The church of the Holy Maries—Prayers—The marshes of Camargue—Arrival of Vincent—Outburst of his grief—Canticle of the Saintins—Mirelle's last vision—The Maries appear to her over the sea—Last words and radiant death of Mirelle—Lamentations—Despair.

I.

WHERE blooms the orange, when the hour of prayer
Melts into dew, his nets the fisher spreads,
And hauls ashore his bark with nightly care;
The bough set free, springs o'er the damsels' heads;
Their baskets piled, they poise on head or hip,
Each aiding each in laughing sistership;

2.

Where Argens' waves his mazy banks indent, [1]
On hill are heard, on busy way, and mead,
All sounds in evening chant symphonious blent;
But bleat of goat must cease, and sylvan reed,
And the soft music of love's whispered tale,
When the dun mountains night and horror veil.

3.

Thus as from cloud to golden cloud they rise,
The Maries' voices wane away in air,
So the full anthem that in echo dies;
Thus through the ancient church some song of prayer
Might upward soar, that winds to Heaven might sweep;
Still lies Mirelle in cradled infant's sleep,

4.

And kneeling, dreams, while round her temples shine
Strange rays of sun, as heads of glitt'ring spears,
Transfiguring her beauty to divine;
Meanwhile her parents, bowed with toil and years,
Her sanctuary tracked o'er fell and moor,
Gaze in dismay, and lean against the door.

5.

In the blessed font their hands they plunge and spread
On her hot brow, then cast a quick'ning rain;
As o'er the echoing floor they scantly tread,
Mirelle cries, scared as lark that on the plain
The fowler sees, "Ye dear ones, why so fleet
Blench from your child?" and throws her at their feet.

6.

Then runs the mother, tear drops on her cheek,
And folds her daughter in a wild embrace.
"Why burns thy head? Why fall'st thou, pale and weak?
'Tis mine own child, my very child's sweet face,
Pleads at my feet, no mocking dream beguiles;"
And her swift tears do battle with her smiles.

7.

"Mirelle, my sweet, 'tis I thy hand caress,
Thy father, I"—his words are dimmed in tears;
Her numbed hand with the strength of tenderness
He chafes and soothes, while air-winged rumour bears
The tale around. The gathering Saintins crowd[2]
The porch, their wonder deep, their pity loud.

8.

"Bear her, oh! bear," they cry, "the stricken child
To where the Maries from their chapel call;
Touch she their bones, unwasting, undefiled,
Or kiss with anguished lips the outer wall
Of the blessed arks where miracles abound;"
The women pair, and raise her from the ground.

9.

Piled in three heights to triplicate the fane,
Hewn of the living rock three chapels stand,
A native altar consecrates each plane;
Saint Sara claims the crypt, whom many a band
Of swarth Bohemians gathers to adore;
God's pilgrims round the second altar pour;

10.

Poised on the pillars of the holiest place,
The Maries' mortuary chapel rests;
Its vaulted roof high tow'ring into space;
Each cypress shrine's rich treasury attests
How Heaven's choice favours as the rain descend;
Four skilful locks each hallowed ark defend.

11.

Once lauds each century the arks unsealed;
Happy, thrice happy, who hath glanced with eye
Or felt with hand the holy things revealed;
His bark fair-starred 'fore favouring gales will fly;
Scarce what his fruit-tree gives his baskets bear,
While faith, full pinioned, speeds aloft his prayer.

12.

A gate of oak, of sculpture richly rare,
Stands as the holy precinct's outer guard,
The art and godly tribute of Beaucaire;
But not the gate of fortress triple barred,
Nor keep, nor bastion profits as the grace
That watches ever in the azure space.

13.

To the small chapel up the spiral height
They bear the sick one. 'Gainst the willing door
Presses the priest in surplice snowy white;
As barley haulm with load of ear bent o'er
By early whirlwind bend they to the dust,
And single-minded pray with infant trust;

14.

"O beauteous Maries, touched by human need,
Ye saints ordained of God, and friends of man,
Pity, oh! pity this poor broken reed;"
"And if, O saints, ye'll raise my child," so ran
The mother's vow, "with hymns of praise I'll bring
My cross flower sculptured, and most golden ring."

15.

"Ye pitying saints my golden plover spare,
Redeem my soul's bright treasure from the rust;"
Old Raymond cried, and wrestled with despair;
"Life should her portion be, though mine the dust,
Fair is she, young, and innocent, and I,
A withered stock wherein the sap is dry,

16

"Should rot to feed the mallows of the field."—
Speechless with slumbering eyes still lay Mirelle,
Wan day began to swarthy night to yield,
To the high roof they bore her that the spell
Of salt airs charged with tamarisk scent might free
Her rustic pulse to bound with rustic glee.

17.

The portal, eyelid of the hallowed fane,
Looks on the church—afar appears below
The mystic line that seems to wed the main
And firmament, that yet no fusion know,
The vaulted azure, and the bitter deep,
Whose restless waters jar the drowned man's sleep.

18.

Like frenzied things fantastically bound
The waves, and topple each o'er other's head,
Or fret the sand that wails with hissing sound;
Here is a plain interminably spread,
The sleek horizon not a hillock scars,
A vast bronze sky savannas vaster chars.

19.

The slender tamarisk bends to every air
Its shadeless spray—with samphire drear and dun
Lie fallows blotched with pools, where swans repair
To bleach their tarnished radiance in the sun;
O'er the scant herbage herds, scant livers, stray,
Or, heavy swimmers, cross to Vaccarés.

20.

Then spake at length dim murmuring Mirelle
Vague words—"Two climates compass me around,
One with sea sweetness freighted seems to tell
Of morning health, the other to abound
In stagnant airs that complicate my breath,
Of savour charged with bitterness and death."

21.

She ceased, and o'er the furthest land and sea
The people cast a melancholy glance;
In the 'mid plain they see amazedly
'Midst waves and spray of dust a youth advance,
Haste on his brow, and on his cheek dismay,
The tamarisks crushed his arrowy path betray.

22.

'Tis hopeless Vincent, miserable lad;—
Soon as from Ambrose tolled such words as these,
"Never with mutual touch thy lips shall glad
The fruit that beautifies the cornel trees;"
Once more his dangerous delight to view
From Valabrègue like bandit chased he flew.

23.

In Cray, " She's sheltered with the Saints," they tell,
Nor Rhone, nor swamp, nor Cray aye lengthening stays
His furious haste—the sacred citadel
He gains, and 'bove the pale crowd casts his gaze,
On tiptoe poised, and shrieks in his despair,
" Where is she? Tell me, point me, lead me where."

24.

" Her agony," they say, " yon chapel holds;"
Quick up the stair the desperate lover flies;
On the cold floor he sees her stretched, and folds
His quivering hands and lifts his burning eyes—
" What have I done, O God, that thou should'st shed
Such floods of horrors on my unconscious head?

25.

" Did I e'er death-wound on that bosom stamp
Whence life I drank, or pipe profanely fire
In holy church at consecrated lamp;
As ne'er-repenting Jew through thorns and mire
The symbol crucifix blaspheming trail,
That ills like fire thus on me thou dost hail?

26.

" Not to refuse her to my life content
Ten times for me they heat the martyr's doom;"
His love he kisses—at his wild lament
All hearts in that great throng his woes assume,
Swell with his sobs, and tremble with his fears,
And with his bitter mix their tender tears.

27.

As from the gorge's deepest cleft ravine
Booms up the thunder of the burst cascade,
To where the shepherd sues the topmost green,
So to the heavenly realms the winds conveyed
This canticle that Saintins daily sang
In solemn chant wherewith the temple rang:

28.

" Ye beauteous saints, who rule the seas,
Who chose our sand your church to found,
Defiant of the flood and breeze,
With snow white tower embattled round,
What were the sailor's strength and skill,
Against the storm that rends his sail,

Were not your mercy there to still
The angry sea, and bind the gale?

29.

"The aged beggar, lone and blind,
No balm, no sage, no pity heals,
Cast off from nature, and her kind,
Seldom she speaks but ever feels;
Pity her darkness of the day
That lags so lame in mental blight,
Oh! cast her back the heavenly ray,
Or close in death her ever night.

30.

"Ye queens of Paradise, whose will
Commands the bitter deep, and store
Of fishes drives our net to fill,
Behold repentant at your door
What crowds of sinners suppliant stand,
Pity their penitential woe,
Sweet lilies of our salten land,
On those who need, your peace bestow."

31.

Thus prayed the pious Saintins with such cries
As pierce the strongest heart's most inner cell;
The saints who wield the mercies of the skies,
Breathed a faint vigour in the wan Mirelle,
O'er her pale cheek a flush of triumph flew,
For Vincent seen waked dearest joys anew.

32.

She asks, "Whence com'st thou, loved and lovely friend,
Rememberest thou that evening at the farm,
Beneath the arbour? 'Twas as if mine end
Of joy thou saw'st, and said'st, if ought of harm,
Of grief, or wrong, should desolate my day,
To the blessed Maries I should flee, and pray.

33.

"Dear Vincent, could'st thou in my heart behold
As in the crystal, comfort, comfort, there
Thou'dst see abounding, and thyself had'st told
Each day, how was it swept and cleansed of care;
Its sinking pulse such heavenly rapture fires,
My eyes re-open on God's angel choirs."

34.

She ceased in calm—and in the distance gazed,
As 'twere great marvels in its depths of blue
Perplexed her vision, or her soul amazed;
Then in halt words she struggled to renew
Her waning speech—"Past measure blest are they,
Whose chastened souls can cast their mortal clay.

35.

"Thou, Vincent, hast beheld what flakes of light
In their ascension, glorified their way,
Oh! what a beauteous book that pen could write,
That strung their golden words, nor let one stray;"
But Vincent, anguish bursting from his breast,
Thus his exceeding agony confessed:

36.

"Would God I'd seen them, oh! how had I clung
Like noxious vermin to their robes, and roared,
'Tear from my mouth my miserable tongue,
Ye Queens of Heaven, if not in vain adored,
In its fast socket every tooth surprise,
And with hot pincers hollow out mine eyes;

37.

"But her, my tender, gentle fairy, spare,
And to my vows her loving life resign;"
"Behold, again I see them coming there,
See how their robes of lawn as snowdrift shine,"
She cried, and struggling from her mother's knee,
With wasted hand she signalled o'er the sea.

38.

All start erect, and o'er the ocean peer,
Both hands in aid held forth 'twixt eyes and brow,
And counsel thus: "We've searched, nor far, nor near,
Can eye or fancy tell of sail or prow,
Naught save the pallid bound that parts the skies
And bitter waves." "Look well once more," she cries;

39.

"Hither in sailless bark I see them glide;
See ye not how before them curbs the sea
Its savage billows in their crested pride?
Whom else could sweetest-breathing gales agree
Through crystal air on eddies glad to bring,
While trains of fowl in homage droop the wing?"

40.

"All this the child's delirious fancy paints,
We see but how beneath the crimson deep
The red sun sinks." "They come, the saints, the saints;
Ye dare not say mine eyes false vigil keep,
Lo! how they climb the wave, then downward slide,
O wondrous God, they come, and Thou their Guide."

41.

Life from her young cheek fadeth; ye have seen
A daisy sicken 'neath the bleaching rays
Ere take its petal spikes their ruby sheen;
And Vincent, trembling o'er his loved one, prays
Our Virgin Lady, and the peaceful Blessed
To calm her passage to abiding rest.

42.

The tapers lighted, robed in purple stole,
The holy man brings forth the angelic bread,
Her palate's burning anguish to console,
Next the last unction consecrates her head,
The passing chrism seven times her frame anoints,
With measured awe, as Holy Church appoints.

43.

All life was hushed, save on the marble floor
The kneeling priest the Oremus deep toned forth;
The walls were blazoned by the day no more,
That sought its morrow's vigour in the north;
Soft ripples crept along the holy keep
With whispers faintly recusant of sleep.

44.

The tender lover, wretched, knelt beside
The wretched parents, drowning sobs in tears;
"Rise," cried Mirelle, with joy intensified,
"The parting hour hath signalled that it nears;
Embrace we quickly, for with broader light
The Maries' aureoles herald of their flight.

45.

"Rhone's bright flamingoes gather in their way,
The tamarisk boughs in adoration stoop;
O glorious saints, I hasten to obey
Your signs, and humbly join your heavenly troop,
Secure that they who watch the pilot skies,
Their bark will anchor safe in Paradise."

46.

"Dear heart," cried Raymond, "have I quelled the soil
To ear fresh acres thou shall never tread,
My thirst sole wage and harvest of my toil?
Though hurled the sun his fury on my head,
From the foul glebe though parching vapours rose,
Thy look was fountain sweetness and repose."

47.

"If in thy lamp some moth shall maim its wing,
Believe me, father, 'twill be thy Mirelle.
See, on the prow the saints stand signalling,
Tarry a space, for my sick limbs rebel
'Gainst my fast will, which would be where ye are;"
The mother sobbed, "Such burden who shall bear?

48.

"Thou must not, must not die, but live for me;
And when, Mirelle, thou'rt quit of this great ill,
Thine aunt Aurane we'll visit o'er the lea,
And baskets for her with pomegranates fill;
Maillane is but a gentle while from Baux,
One day's fair speed will bear us to and fro."

49.

"Nay, 'tis not far, good mother, but thou'lt tread
That path alone; then, mother, haste and find
My robe of white—thou seest what folds bespread
The Maries' shoulders, shining on the wind;
When on the mountain tops the drifts alight,
In all its splendour is the snow less white."

50.

Then loud the ruddy basket-weaver cried,
"My beauteous all, that open'dst to my view
Thy palace fresh of love beatified;
My blooming alms, through whom I did renew
To mirror's sheen my gross unchastened heart,
(Yet slander ne'er for us forged poisoned dart:)

51.

"Thou pearl of Provence, thou creative breath
Of my youth's joys, and shall men say I saw
Thy fevered struggle with the ice of death?
Great saints, shall men make shipwreck of their awe,
That ye should see her agony embrace
In vain the threshold of your promised Grace?"

52.

Whereon in accents deprecating, slow,
The maiden answered: "What should blind thine eyes,
Mine own poor Vincent, that thou should'st not know
The worth of death, that man so falsifies,
A mist that takes 'fore morning bell its flight,
A dream that wakens with the death of night?

53.

"No, I die not, e'en now with step of air
I spring into the bark, adieu, adieu,
We're in the wide sea, water everywhere;
Thou glorious plain of ever-rolling blue,
All round one gate of Paradise I see,
Where Heaven descends to wed itself to thee.

54.

"See, how the soft waves cradle us to rest,
Sure I shall find, 'mid all those stars on high
Some few fond hearts that long to be caressed,
And live and love as those who ne'er shall die;
Ye saints, what organ peals across the deep?"
She sighed, and turned her round as 'twere to sleep.

55.

Thou wouldst have thought the music in her mouth
Yet living language—round the Saintina pressed
And pass from hand to hand in solemn file
The burning taper, and the Cross confess
Around her passing presence traced in air,
The prostrate parents wonder 'midst despair.

56.

Despite death's shades, with light they see her glow
Their touch is all incredulous of cold,
Their faith denies the inconsolable blow;
But Vincent's fears more truthfully behold
The head hung back that unrecovered lies,
The stiff cramped arms, and mist that dulls the eyes.

57.

"Ah! she is dead! consent ye not, she's dead!"
And as one strains and twirls the osier bands,
His arms unsleeved he stretches o'er his head,
And wrings with torture his enfolded hands;
"For thee alone will tears of pity flow,
While I, unpitied, live but for my woe.

58.

"Ah! she is dead! Dead? 'Tis a clumsy lie
Some mocking demon whispered in mine ear;
Say ye in God's love, who've seen maidens die,
Good people say, put on the dead such cheer?
Can they with smiles thus cross the gate of night?
Lo! blooms her cheek with some new found delight!"

59.

They answer not; but turn their heads askance;
They swell with sobs. "My widowed doom I take,
No more thy sweet voice shall my soul entrance."
Hard beats each heart—their tears their floodgates [break,
And outward bursting violently free,
Mix with the murmurs of the throbbing sea.

60.

'Midst a great herd a heifer pines and dies,
Around her, stretched for ever stiff and pale,
Nine evenings flock the bulls and cows with cries
And tears their gentle sister to bewail;
Nine days the land, the water, and the wind
Echo the dismal lowings of her kind.

61.

"Weep, weep, old Master Ambrose, for thy son!
Alas! alas!" groaned Vincent, "I implore
Ye Saintins let my grave with hers be one,
There, sainted beauty, in mine ear thou'lt pour
Thy Maries' praise, ye tempests of the deep,
Gather its fairest shells to guard our sleep.

62.

"Men, to your pity I my woes consign,
And not unhopeful sue for heart and hand;
Tears are poor ministers to grief like mine;
Dig us a cradle in the tender sand,
Pile deep and high huge stones, that flood nor tide
Steal off my lovely sleeper from my side.

63.

"While they for whom she ever sunned the scene
Dash 'gainst the stones the drear remorseful head,
We two, soft shrouded in the blue serene,
Thou, love, and I, while peace shall make our bed,
And while the soft sea undulates above,
Will rest in raptures of immortal love."

64.

Thus did the stricken basket pleacher rave,
Then threw him frenzied on the dead Mirelle,
With mad embraces would delay the grave,
And victor Death to yield his prey compel.
From the old church again they hear arise,
Prayer-winged, the canticle to sue the skies.

65.

"Ye Queens of Paradise, whose will
Commands the bitter deep, and store
Of fishes drives our nets to fill,
Behold, repentant at your door,
What crowds of sinners suppliant stand,
Pity their penitential woe,
Sweet lilies of our salten land
On those who need your peace bestow."

THE END.

NOTES ON CANTO XII.

Note 1, stanza 2, line 1.

"Where Argens' waves his mazy banks indent." Argens, a river in the department of Var.

Note 2, stanza 7, line 5.

"The gathering Saintins crowd." The Saintins, the inhabitants of the town of les Saintes Maries.

Note 3, stanza 48, line 5.

"Maillane is but a gentle while from Baux." Maillane, a village in the arrondissement of Arles, the birthplace and residence of M. Mistral as well as of his family for many generations.

Note 4, stanza 50, line 4.

"My blooming alms." Aumône fleurie—aumorno flourido (provençal), an alms which the poor person who has received it gives to another poor person—poetical metaphor for a rare gift.

BENHAM AND HARRISON, PRINTERS, COLCHESTER.